

THE
PREACHERS
P L E A:

O R,

A Treatise in forme of a
plain Dialogue, making known
the worth and necessary vse of Prea-
ching: shewing also how a man may profit
by it, both for the informing of his
iudgement, and the reforming of his life.

By *Samuel Hieron* Minister of the
Gospell at *Modbury* in the Coun-
tie of *Deuon*.

1. Cor. 1. 21.

*Seeing the world by wisdom knew not God,
in the wisdom of God it pleased God by
the foolishnesse of Preaching to save them
that beleene.*



LONDON,
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1604.





To the honest and wel-
disposed Reader.



*I*t is the vsual maner of the
most which publish bookes,
to dedicate the same to some
honorable personage, or to
some one of speciall place,
partly to shew thankes for
some receiued fauors, partly to procure
credit and countenance to their writings, that
vnder so good protection, they may the more
boldly passe forth to the common view of all
men. If I now vaine from this generall recei-
ued course, think not I pray thee (good Rea-
der) that I do it in some humor, as if I either
affected singularity, or misliked the common
custome: but know for a truth that there are
these two causes of my so doing: The first is the
obscuritie of mine owne condition, who living
here in a remote part, haue wanted either wil,
or opportunitie, or both, to shew my selfe vnder
the patronage of some great person: The
second is, the nature of this present Treatise:

The Preface

for howsoever there be (and that not farre from the place of mine abode) some of good qualittie, upon whose acceptance, I thinke, I might have presumed, yet considering, that this which I have framed, is but a homely and course discourse, meant onely for men of the plainest fashion, I thought I should breake the rules of comelinesse and correspondence, if I should advance the inscription of my labour (if I may dare so to call it) to a person of higher degree, then that meane and middle ranke, to the use whereof, all that these following leaues containe, was alone intended. Therefore (friendly Reader) whosoever thou be, if thou be a true Nathanael, a man of an honest and good heart, be thy outward condition as it may be, though thou lye among the pots, or art behind the ewes with young, or howsoever else, euen as it were bound in outward misery, and of base esteeme in the eyes of men, yet thou art he whose patronage I affect, and in the hope of whose good allowance I take comfort. I know well that he which offereth any thing to the sight of the world, must make ready his backe for the long furrowes of euerie byring censure. It was truly said of him (though but a heathen) that amongst men nothing can scape without a nippe. But what then? If thy conscience

John. 1. 47.

Luke. 8. 15.

Pfal. 68.13.

Pfal. 78. 71.

Psalm. 107. 10.

Plm. 129.2.

ALLEN LINTON JR.

και η γένετο

Agrois. Clear.

ch as apud A.

then,

to the Reader.

conscience shall giue this testimonie of mine
endeuours, that thy heart is comforted there-
by, in regard that thy iudgement is strenghten-
ed in so necessary a point, then let the most
professed and sharpe-toothed carper say what
he please: nay though (as Iob speaketh) he Iob 31. 35. 36.
should write a booke against me, yet I
would take it vpon my shoulder, and bind
it as a crowne vnto me. And as Dauid 2. Sam. 6. 22.
reckened not of Michols taunts in regard of
the honour done vnto him by those religious
maiden; so will I also set at naught the malici-
ous taxings of all gaine-sayers, if I shall ap- 2. Cor. 4. 2.
proue my selfe to thy conscience in the
sight of God.

If thou now demaund of me, what it is The summe of
the Treatise.
which I do here offer vnto thee, know this
briefly: It is a Treatise tending to the discon-
erie of the worth and excellencie of the word
preached; teaching thee also, which art a con-
tinuall hearer, how thou maist by hearing
edifie thy selfe in thy most holy faith; as well Iude 10.
by establishing thy heart in the soundnesse of
truth, that so thou maist not be caried about Heb. 13. 9.
with diuers and strange doctrines; as by
framing thy selfe to obey from the hart vnto Rom 6. 17.
the forme of doctrine, whereunto thou either
art or shalt be deliuered. This is the summe.

The Preface

The causes of
writing it.

2. Pet. 3. 16.

If thou demaund againe, what hath moued me to attempt this? I answer in a few words. There are two questions common in the mouthes of many, either ignorant, or ill-disposed persons, by which the beautie of Preaching is and hath bene much defaced in the eyes of many not so well settled: the one is, What need all this preaching? the other is, Who knoweth whom to belecue among these Preachers? These two demaunds were first hatched in hell, but since being cherished by Anabaptistcall and Popish spirits, and by them buzzed into the heads of vnlearned, vnstable, and irreligious people, they are brought vnto a diuellsish perfection. Somewhat I can say out of mine owne experience, that through a conceit that these two questions (as they are pressed by some nely workemen) are vnanswerable, our Ministry is drawne into contempt, and the calling of a Preacher is deemed of al other professions the most superfluous, and such as may wel be spared without any preiudice to the wel-being of Gods Church. The giuing answer to these hellish interrogatories, as it hath many times exercised me in the execution of my publike ministry, so it hath at this time drawne me to the compiling of this present Treatise: both that those of these parts, who to
my

to the Reader.

my knowledge haue need, and do desire it also,
may haue something by them, whereupon ad-
visedly to deliberate for the setting of their
iudgments, and that others likewise elsewhere,
who (it may be) haue experience of the like
Satanicall encounters, may (instead of a bet-
ter help) enioy the benefite of this that I haue
laboured in. This is the maine occasion, this is
my chiefe intent in this Tractate: wherein as I
haue freely uttered that which I am perswa-
ded is the truth, so will I be ready also either to
alter or better my iudgement, if any man out
of the word of God shall offer to instruct me:
hauing learned this lesson, to teach what I
know without grudging, and to learne that
wherein I am ignorant without blushing. And
though perhaps many know in this matter as
much as I or any man can tell them, yet I am
sure many are ignorant, and therefore I may
well maintaine my course with that saying of
Augustine, It is better to giue him that
hath, then to turne him away which hath
not. It is meeter that they which know should
be wearied with many repetitions, then those
which are unskilful sent away empty for want
of instruction. As for writers in our times,
directly of this subiect I know none. If there be
none, I wish there may be; for as the saying is,

Disertus an.
et honestus mag-
ister amari-
gunt. Gr. Basil.
Epist. ad Greg.
Nazian.

August de Bap.
contra Donat.

The Preface

*Εἰς ἀντὶς, ἵδ' εἰς
ἀντὶς.*

*Ναὺς μὴ μὴ
πᾶντας ἀγῆ.
Theog.*

*Diuersos stylos non
diuersa fide. Au-
gustin. de Trinit.
lib. 1. cap. 3.*

*Semotipsum lau-
dare vani, vitu-
perare, stultus est.
Laire. de Arist.*

*Hieronym. ad
Marcellinam.*

One man is no man : and by the more this truth is anouched, the better it is confirmed. If there be that haue laboured in this very kind wherein I now do, yet it can be no presu-
dce to my endeuour. The auncient proverbe is, that One bark cannot beare all passengers ; so neither can one author serue all men. Au-
gustine held it profitable, that of the same questions, many bookes should be made by sun-
dry men in a differing stile, though not with a differing faith. All stomackes we see are not alike, One kind of dressing pleaseth one, which hath no relish with another : and yet the same meate ordered after some other fashon, may fit his appetite also. As there is a difference of stomacks, so of humors and dispositions in men. The same matter diuersly handled, may find entertainement with diuers men; which yet di-
gested after one onely fashon, would haue ac-
ceptance but with a few.

Touching the maner of writing, I wil pro-
mise thee nothing more then ordinary. It is not
for me either to praise or discommend mine
owne workes : the one were vanitie, the other
folly. I submit all to thy iudgement. Onely this
I say somewhat to help my selfe. Hieroni saith
there are two things requisite for diuinity-stu-
dies, Silence and Leisure. Of the lacke of both
these

to the Reader.

these I may well complaine. Household affaires,
and the stirres occasioned by those businesses,
cannot but breed distraction: and he which is
exercised with the care of a congregation, shall
meet with very seldome intermission. I intreat
thee therefore, when thou shalt find me to faile
in any thing (from which I account not my selfe
priviledged) impute it to this forenamed want;
and hope thus of me, that if I had had more
freedome and more time, all things should haue
bene brought to bett^{er} perfection.

I haue troden in an old beaten path, both by
old and new writers, by Diuines and Heathen,
namely, to frame my matter to the forme of a
Dialogue, a very good way (in my seeming) to
help the vnderstanding of common men: I con-
fesse it to haue haue eased me much in writing,
I doubt not but it shall turne to thy benefite in
reading also. Well, whatsoeuer it is, (good Rea-
der) thine it is: and being thine, I am comanded
by him that may command vs al, not to with-
hold it frō thee. Receiue it therefore with the
same hand with which it is deliuered to thee.

Use it to thy comfort; and whatsoeuer good
thou receiuest by it, let the glory be the Lords.

All that I desire of thee by way of recompence,
is that thou be a suter to God on my behalfe,
that with his preuenting and following mercy

PROV. 3. 37.

Vt prouenientia
& subsequens
misericordia,

The Preface to, the Reader.

quacunq; sci-
enda ne scio doce-
at me, in his que
vera nouis custo-
diat me, in quibus
ut homo fallor
corras me. Ful-
gen. ad Mon. 1.
1. Thess. 5. 23.

in all needful things which I know not, he wold
instruct me, in all truth which I do know he
wold uphold me, and in those things, wherein
as a man I haue fauled, he wold reforme me.
And the same God sanctify vs both through-
out, that our whole spirit, and soule, and
body, may be kept blamelesse, vnto the co-
ming of our Lord Iesus Christ. Farewell.
Modbury in Deuon. 1. September, 1604.

Thine in the Lord,

Sam: Hieron.





The Preachers Plea:
Or a Treatise in forme of a
 plaine Dialogue, making knowne the
worth and necessitie of that which we call
Preaching: shewing also how a man may
profit by it, both for the informing of his
 iudgement, and the reforming of his life.

Epaphras a Minister. *Nymphas* a priuat man.

Nymphas.



Ir, vnlesse I do very much
 mistake, I haue oftē heard
 you in your publike ser-
 mons vrge the sufficiency
 that ought to be in a Mi-
 nister, and especially for
 the clearing of doubts and cases of consci-
 ence among those of whō the holy Ghost
 hath made him an ouerseer.

Epaphras. It is not vnlike, that among
 other points deliuered in the ordinarie
 ministry, you haue receiued this also:

Mal. 1. 7.

1. Pet. 2. 17.

Psal. 115. 5.

Ila 50. 4.

so: I am well advised, that of old it was the appointment of God, that the Priests lips should preserve knowledge, and men should seeke it at his mouth. So that we all, as many as tender the good of the Church of Christ, haue cause to bewaile our countries estate, in which are so many VVells without water, as S. Peter termeth them, and that not vnfitly: for as a well placed by the way side, in regard of the outward seeming thereof, putteth the poore thirsty traoueller in hope of some refreshing; who repairing to it, and finding nothing but emptinesse, goeth on his way with the greater discouragement: so these kind of men standing in the Church of God, do by reason of their outward habite & semblance of grauitie, make the wearied, distressed & perplexed Christian conceiue, that if he haue recourse to them he shall certainly be relieved: but yet when he maketh triall, he findeth them to his greater grieve, not vnlike to the images of the Heathen, VVhich haue mouthes and speake not; not hauing the tongue of the learned, that they should know how to minister a word in time to him that is weary. But tell me
neigh

neighboꝝ, I pray you, this being granted, what you would inferre hereupon?

Nymphas. Surely, that which I would inferre hereupon is this, that you being by your calling a Minister, are therefore able, and being also by the providence of God that Minister, vpon whose labours I must especially depend, are willing also to enter discourse with me, and to affoord me your best helpe for my better vnderstanding in some points, wherein I haue of late dayes bene very much perplexed.

Epaph. For mine abilitie in this behalf, what it ought to be I know, and what I wish it to be, I know also; yet whatsoever it is, I shall be most willing (as my dutie is) to spend my time, to bestow my labour, and to employ my best endeuors in so holy a businesse as is your building vp in knowledge, and your furtherance in the wayes of godlinesse. And I do heartily wish, that both you and others of our neighboꝝ would moze often giue me the like occasion, I should then the better know your doubts, and so fit my selfe to speake in preaching to euery mans conscience, and you also should by that means be resolved in many things,

The profit of
conference
betwixt the
Minister and
his people.

Heb 5. 14

which for lacke of conference must needs breed scruple, especially in those which haue not yet through long custome exercised wits to discern both good and euill.

Nymp. I am not a litle glad to heere this from you: for to tell you the truth plainly without flattery, I haue heard some complaine of a certaine strangenesse in you and others of your coate, which they say hath discouraged them from aduenturing to conferre with you.

Epaph. That may be but a pretence, & yet it will not altogether excuse either others or my selfe herein: happily we be not so tender ouer the wants of our people as we ought to be. Howsoeuer to prevent any such feare in you for this time, I pray you be bold to speake your mind freely, and you shall find me far from seeming weary of you, or from giuing you any occasion to thinke that I am vnwilling to take to resoluē you (as I may) in any thing that may trouble you. And I pray God, the God of all grace, euen for Christs sake, so to blesse this our conference, by giuing to vs both a right iudgment in all things, that it may be both to his glorie, and to our further comfort.

Nymp.

The Preachers Plea.

5

Nymp. Amen. Well then, because I doe
euē long to acquaint you with that which
hath (when I haue bene by my selfe) much
disquieted me, you shall vnderstand, that
the occasion mouing me at this time to
craue your aduice, is this: Since it pleased
God to let the light of the glorious Gospel
of his Sonne, by preaching to shine in these
parts more clearely then in former yeares,
it hath happened that I haue fallen into the
companie, sometime of common men,
sometime of men of better fashion, which
in the world we call wise men; sometime
also of men of learning, and by profession
Ministers; some of whom to my grieve I
haue heard speake very disgracefully, some
very scornefully, all of them to the lessening
of that reuerent estimation which we
ought to haue of the preaching of the
word, and of the ordinary course thereof
which is amongst vs.

The occasion
of the whole
Dialogue.

Epaph. It is not vnlike, neither yet
indeed is it to be maruelled at, as though
some strange thing were come vnto vs.
The diuell knoweth by long experience,
that the preaching of the word is y^e ruine
of his kingdom, & that therby he is made
like lightning to fall downe from heauen. Luke 10. 18.

Resistāce doth
ouercome
by the preach-
ing of the truth

2 Tim. 3. 8.

Inde 14 15.

9 Pet. 2. 5.

Mat. 24. 39.

Exod. 2. 14

And therefore it hath cuer bene his praise, at the very first entrance of sincere preaching, to raise vp some men of corrupt minds, to resist the truth, and to stop the happie proceedings of the Gospell. The first Preacher mentioned in the Scripture, is Enoch the seventh from Adam, together with the relation of whose doctrine, the text mentioneth also the cruell speakings, and violent curses of wicked sinners against him. The next after him was Noah, which was a Preacher of righteousness: and howsoever the storie mentioneth expressly no tumults raised vp against him, yet it may easily be gathered, in that he preaching so many yeares befoze the comming of the flood, yet all that while we do not find any one to haue bene reclaimed, but they all continued in their accustomed securitie, and knew nothing till the flood came and tooke them all away. Passe from him to Moses, of whose resistance the storie relateth many particulars: at his first undertaking any authoritie among the people, in seeking to end a strife betwixt them, he was taken vp short with the common speech, VWho made thee a man
of

of authoritie and a iudge ouer vs? After,
when he was sent backe into Egypt to
deliuer the people from the bondage of
Pharaoh, the floz is a witnes how often Exod. 5. 30.
and openly he was gainsaid, sometimes
by the people, they murmuring at him;
sometimes by Iannes and Iambre, two 2 Tim 3 8.
Numb. 16.
Egyptians, somtimes by Korah and his
complices: so that though the Lord
wrought mightily by Moses, yet he had
daily experience of the malice of the wic-
ked against the truth. Now for the times
of the Prophets, one Ieremie may be a
sufficient witnesse: he saith, he heard the
railing of many, and the word of the Lord Ierem. 20. 3. &c
which he preached was a reproach vnto
him, and in derision daily. If you examine
the times after Christ, at the first sprea-
ding of the Gospell, this wil be more ap-
parant. Run through the booke of the Acts:
the preaching of Peter and Iohn was en- Act. 4. 13.
tertained first with mocking: afterwards
more open violence was vsed, & the men
in authoritie tooke it grieuously that they Act. 4. 2.
taught the people, and by comon consent
put them to silence. Steuen was a man Ver. 18.
full of faith and of the holy Ghost, and they
were not able to resist the wisdom and

AA 6.59.10.13

AA 13.8.

AA 14.9.

A 1.19.24.

1 Tim. 1.15.

A 2.17.

the spirit by which he spake, yet certaine arose euen of the synagogue, and moued the people against him. Paul was mightily withstood, sometimes by Elinas the soxcerer, sometimes by the Jewes, sometimes by Demetrius and those of that faction, sometime by Phygellus and Hermogenes, otherwhiles by Hymeneus and Philetus. Thus we haue euen a cloud of witnesses to confirme this, that it hath euer bin the diuels course by all meanes to withstand the preaching of the truth. And therefore maruell not, good neighbours, at it, when you see the like in these times: these are Satans old pranks, and he will thus bestirre himselfe to the end.

Nymp. Blessed be God, you haue well satisfied me in this: so that I now see that those which loue the truth, haue cause to reioyce at it, rather then to be dismayed when they shall see the outrage of the world, and the fury of carnall men against the publishing of the Gospell.

Epaph. You are not deceiued: for the diuel his strugling on this wise, sheweth that there is a stronger then he come, to bind him, and to take his armes from him. And though the oppositions of men are
at

Luk 11.21.

od

at the first assault something troublesome,
yet we haue euer cause to reioyce, when
we can say iustly, After this maner did Luke 6. 31.
they to the Prophets.

Nymp. Yet sir, by your leaue, I cannot
but maruell, that seeing the preaching of
the word is so excellent a thing as it is, eue
the power of God vnto salutation, men should Rom 1. 16.
notwithstanding so eagerly resist it, and
shew themselues so great enemies vnto it.

Epaoh. You wil cease to wonder, when
you shal truly vnderstand the causes mo-
uing worldly and vnregenerate men to
malice and maligne that, which indeed
as you say, if the worth thereof were
knowne, they ought rather with al reue-
rence to embrace: and if you thinke that
it may be helpfull vnto you in that,
wherein you desire to be resolved, I will
open the same vnto you something more
at large.

Nymp. You cannot content me better,
then if you shall vndertake to discourse
thereof: for (as I suppose) when I haue once
learned the true cause why preaching is so
much misliked, I shall the lesse feare the
pretenced reasons which I dayly heare to
be alleaged against it.

The causes of
the dislike of
preaching

The first cause

1 King 22. 8.

Prognosticate

Eph. 5. 13.

Epaph. The true causes why the course of preaching, when it is performed so as it ought, is so much repined at, are these three especially. The first is this. As men loue nothing more then their sinnes, so they loath nothing more then the discovery thereof: they can by no meanes endure to haue their secret corruptions ript vp: it is a death vnto them to be thoroughly & directly dealt withal. Wicked Ahab hated the sincere Prophet of the Lord Michaiah, because he neuer prophesied good vnto him, but euill; that is, he neuer spared him, but deliuered the truth of God vnto him plainly without flattery. Now the preaching of the word, it is as the prouerb is, The finger in the bile; it is euer rubbing vpon the gall: and being light, it maketh all things manifest, and discloseth euery mans close and secret vngodlines. In the dayes of blindness (that is, in times and places where there is not a settled course of preaching) many a man seemeth to himselfe and to others also to be vnreproueable, who when the light of the word by powerful application breaketh out, is discovered both to others, & especially to his owne conscience,

conscience, to be nothing else then that which he was supposed to be. Here is the one cause of dislike: the word thus handled, openeth that which men of all other things desire most to be concealed: so that it is true of the word of Christ, which he witnesseth of himselfe, The world hateth me, because I testifie thereof that the workes of it are euill. Tell me now I pray you, what thinke you of this?

Ans. Truly I cannot but beare witness to the truth hereof out of mine owne experience. For howsoeuer, I have now learned, I thanke God, to say with David; *Let the righteous smite me, for that is a benefite; let him reprove me, and it shall be a precious oile that shall not breake my head:* yet I well remember, when I first heard preaching, I was many times discontented: me thought the Preacher was too peremptory, and a great deale more plaine then needed; yea I had much ado at times, not to perswade my selfe that I was chiefly aimed at in some things, and that the Preacher had receiued some secret informations touching me and my demeanour, which he there opened in the pulpit. So hard a

Eph 6 19.

Isa 58 1.

Zach 1 11.

Isa 62 6.

thing is it for flesh and blood to beare the words of reproofe, yea though in the witness of a mans owne conscience he hath euery way deserued the same. But I hartily beseech God on the behalfe of you and others of your sort, that he would enlarge your spirits, *and giue utterance vnto you, that you may open your mouthes boldly to publish the secret of the Gospell.* For I thinke there were neuer any dayes of greater securitie, in which it is needfull that the men of God should *lift up their voice like a trumpet, to shew the people their transgressions, and the house of Iacob their sins:* because indeed as it was said of old, *All the world sitteth still and is at rest.* And I wish vnfaignedly, that the seuerall watchmen in their particular charges would remember that Item which the spirit of God giueth by the Prophet: *Ye that are mindfull of the Lord keepe not silence.* But sir I am afraid I do too much interrupt you, therefore I pray you proceed to shew the next reason of dislike.

Enaph. Wen have said the very truth. We can be content to heare the word vntill it risle vs. But as a purging petiō, as long as it is in drinking, is but as
other

other drink vntill it worke, and then we could be content to cast it vp againe: so we can quietly heare the word vntill it work vpon vs, but then it seemeth a burden vnto vs. But to come to the opening of the second reason of the dislike of preaching: I haue by obseruation found it to be this, because preaching is (as they suppose) an enemy vnto libertie, a thing which by nature euery man desireth to enioy. In the second Psalm we reade what is the opinion that men haue of Christian obedience, they call it bands & cords, that is to say, more seruitutic and flauery, a base and ignominious thing to be conformable. This is the very right concept which worldlings haue of yelding them selues vnto the doctrine of Christ Jesus. When Lot admonished the Sodomites, & begā to perswade with thē to desist from violence against the strangers that were with him in his house; they cried strait, Shall he iudge and rule? Forthwith they began to repine against his godly aduise, as against a matter of too much tyrannie in Lot, and of too great subiection in themselves. It was the imputation of Korah and his adherents to

The second
cause of the
dislike of in-
cere preaching

Psalm 2.3.

Gen 19. 9.

Num. 16. 3.

Amo. 7. 10.

Iohn 1. 48.

Moses and Aaron, You take too much vpon you: they deined the gouernement of Moses too peremptory, as an enemy to their liberty, & therefore not to be endured. When the Prophet Amos preached, it was said, that the land was not able to beare his words: as who should say, his sermons were too censorious: men that were of a liberall and free disposition were not able to digest them. One reason which the Iewes had against Christ to stir vp themselves to find a meanes to suppress him, was, because they supposed that if they let him alone, the Romanes would come and take away both their place and nation. They thought bondage wold follow vpon his doctrine. This might easily be enlarged with the additiō of many examples: but our owne experience may be a sufficient confirmation. For euen at this day the world maintaineth the same opinion of obedience and conformitie in Christian duties, that it is an abridgement to liberty, that it saoureth of slavishnes & basenesse for a man at the words of a Preacher to be restrained.

Nymph. Truly sir it is euen so: for out
of

of my poore experience I am able to witnesse thus much, that many men imagine that for them to liue without controulment, following the sway of their owne affecti-
ons, if they may sweare and blaspheme, and be vicious and riotous, and drink with the drunkard, and profane the Sabbath, and scoffe at zeale and sinceritie in religiō, and runne into all manner of excesse, this is libertie. On the other side, they repute the restraint from any of these things to be the greatest thraldome; a misery it is to be kept within compasse, that a man may not sweare, may not spend the Lords day in sports, or in worldly businesse, or in tra-
uelling vpon his owne occasions, that he must set such a narrow watch before his mouth, as that there should be no fil-
hines nor foolish talking, nor iesting: that he should be tied to the continuall hearing of the word, to often receiuing the sacrament, and the like, this is a misery of all miseries, a thing not to be endured: they crie when you tel the these things, *This is a hard say-
ing, who can abide it?* and determine as those of whom you spake, *Let vs breake their
bands, and cast their cords from vs.* But re-
solue me herin I pray you sir, is this liberty?

Are not men herein altogether mistaken?

Epaph. Yes verily: for howsoeuer men think themselves iolly fellows, because they can saue to contemne all gouernement, yet in indeed of all conditions it is the basest, and of al the aldomes the most flauish for a man to be subiect vnto sin, to be giuen ouer to his owne lussis, to be led wholly by the corrupt affections of his owne hart, and to say the truth, euen in reason it must needs be so: for, as to be a slaue and a vassall is in it selfe very opprobrious, and such a thing as euen the nature of man doth abhorre: so the more vile he is to whom a man is in bondage, the more base and odious is it in the eyes of others, and the more tedious to himselfe if he be of any ingenious disposition. Now what more vile thing can there be imagined then sinne is? What more abominable before God, what more dangerous to the soule of him that committeth it? so that sin being a thing so vile, in how seruile an estate is he that is a slaue and a vassal therunto? Do you conceiue me in this?

Nymph. I conceiue you well. But yet this breeds a further doubt: we may all complaine

complaint with the Apostle, that we are
euen *captiue vnto the law of sinne*: who then Rom 7.3.
is he that may be called a slaue of sinne?

1 paph. Our Saviour shall make you
answer: He that committeth sinne, is the Iohn 8.34
seruant of sinne: to which, to make it

more plaine, you may adde the saying of
the Apostle, Know ye not that to whom Rom. 6.16.

soeuer you giue your selues as seruants to
obey, his seruants you are to whom you
obey? The latter place is an expeditio to

yo other. He (saith Christ) that committeth
sinne, is the seruant of sinne: he commit-

teth sinne (sayth Paul) that obeyeth sin:
now he is said to obey sinne, that finding

his corrupt heart to pꝛouoke him to any
thing, sets himself presently to performe

the same, or as the holy Ghost speaketh,
taketh thought for the flesh to fulfill the

lusts thereof. So the adulterer is a slaue
to his sinne, because he is wholly at the

command thereof, studying how to
compasse the same, and to satiffie his vn-

cleane desires to the vttermoſt. The
drunkard is a vassall to his sinne, be-

cause it is as it were his businesse, to set
himselfe to the committing of it, to get

money to bestow vpon it, to gather com-

7. 1. 2. 3. 4. 5. 6. 7. 8. 9. 10. 11. 12. 13. 14. 15. 16. 17. 18. 19. 20. 21. 22. 23. 24. 25. 26. 27. 28. 29. 30. 31. 32. 33. 34. 35. 36. 37. 38. 39. 40. 41. 42. 43. 44. 45. 46. 47. 48. 49. 50. 51. 52. 53. 54. 55. 56. 57. 58. 59. 60. 61. 62. 63. 64. 65. 66. 67. 68. 69. 70. 71. 72. 73. 74. 75. 76. 77. 78. 79. 80. 81. 82. 83. 84. 85. 86. 87. 88. 89. 90. 91. 92. 93. 94. 95. 96. 97. 98. 99. 100.

Rom. 13.14

pany that he may haue fellowes in it, to rise early to follow it, to make his body able to beare it. The couetous person is a drudge to his money: for, for it he will do any thing, he will defeate one, and defraud another, and oppresse a third, and grind the fourth, and take viury of the fift, and rake and wyng, and extort, and lie and forswear, and whatsoeuer else for his money. He is such a seruant to it, as the Centurions seruants were to him: If money say to him, Go, he trudgeth by and by: if it say Come, it hath him at a becke: if it bid him do this, be it neuer so vile, vniust or vnlawful, cftsons he doth it. In like maner the cōtinual gamester, is as it were in the state of villenage to his humo2, he will neglect all other occasions, either of rest for his body, or of profite for his outward estate, or of religion for his soules good, to fulfill it: for his life (if company be for him) he is not able to forbear it. In like sort, the ignorant man is in bondage to his blindness: for bring all the perswasions you can against it out of the word of God, yet ignorance shall still haue the vpper hand, either he will not conceiue you, or he will not

not beleue you, or he wil not be directed by you. So againe, the superstitious is in thꝛalldome to his owne pꝛeuiſhneſſe; foꝛ let God commaund what he will, or pꝛeſcribe what foꝛm of woꝛſhip he thinketh good, yet thus and thus it hath bene ſo long, and ſo it ſhal be, and ſo wil I do foꝛ euer. In a woꝛd, whoſoeuer ſuffereth himſelfe to be led by the coꝛruption of his owne heart in any thing, without making reſiſtance, without deſiring the aſſiſtance of Gods ſpirit to withſtand it, whether it be pꝛide, malice, reuenge, or whatſoeuer elſe, the ſame is a ſlaue to his ſinne, a dꝛudge to his owne humoꝛ, and the baſeſt creature vnder heauen. Nay he is moꝛe ſlauiſh by degrees, then thoſe ſlaues whō they vſed in old times (and as they do ſtill in ſome countries) to buy with money, and to vſe at their pleaſure. Foꝛ there is no ſuch ſlaue, but he keepeth a free mind in a ſeruile eſtate: but men generally being in this moſt filthy and wꝛetched thꝛalldome, thinke theſelues to be in the moſt happy eſtate that may be, and haue no will nor diſpoſition to be freed, but are enemies to the meanes of their deliueꝛy. Thus haue I

Gen. 9. 22.

Shewed you, that though men thinke themselves at libertie when they may liue licenciously, yet they are much deceiued: it may be said of them as Noah said of Canaan: seruants of seruants they be, doing the businesse of the diuell, not grudgingly or vnwillingly as bond-slaves vsually do, but readily, greedily, and ioyfully.

Gal. 5. 13.

Nymph. I am (I thank you) well satisfied for this: yet by the way giue me leaue to demaund of you one thing, doeth not Paul say to Christians, *Brethren ye haue bene called into libertie*: so that it seemeth there is libertie euē in Christianitie, which what it is (if any such be) I pray you to instruct me.

Epaph. Certainly the state and calling of a true Christian, is a louely calling, a calling that calleth men vnto it, such a calling as that the beames thereof are able to raiue the eye. True it is, that euer since Adam did eate the apple, all the mouthes of his posterity are so out of tast, that we can neither heare nor see, nor tast any thing that god is, so that if we looke vpon the estate of a Christian liuing in obedience, with an eye of flesh,
it

It looketh euē like Chꝛist foꝛ al the woꝛld,
euē as a withered branch, and like a root 16. 51. a
in the drie ground; when we see it, there is
no forme that we should desire it. **The eye**
of a natural man can see no good in it, vn-
lesse it be good to cleaue vnto the Loꝝd, oꝛ
it is good to be afflicted, oꝛ it is good to
run the way of Gods commandements,
and such like, which are like pulles, and
to die foꝛ it, will not downe with a car-
nall man, yet if it be duly considered, it is
the onely estate of libertie. It is not a
fleshly libertie, a libertie foꝛ men to do
and speake, and liue as they themselues
please, euery man after his owne fashiō,
as though the reines should be layed on
euery mans neck, and he left to his owne
disposition. It is no such liberty, foꝛ then
the moꝛe Libertine the better Chꝛistian,
and then all the woꝛld would soone be
religious, foꝛ all the woꝛld are welneare
Libertines. But this liberty which
Chꝛistians haue, is a spirituall libertie,
a heauenly liberty, a liberty of the soule;
not which giueth the body liberty from
obedience, but which setteth the soule at
liberty from destruction: not which ma-
keth vs free to sin, but which setteth vs

fre to serue God : not which giueth a man leaue to liue as caring for none, but which maketh him by loue a seruant vnto all : a freedom it is from the bondage of Satan, from the thralldom of sin, from the heauy curse of Gods law, giuing an interest into Gods sauour, into the merits of Christ, into the felicity of the chosen, into the eternal inheritance of Gods kingdome. This is the liberty of Christians; of which, howsoeuer worldly men which sauour onely of earthly things may iudge, yet such it is and so great, & hath so many priuiledges annexed thereunto, as that all the enfranchisements and freedoms of this world are not worthy therewith to be compared. For as the new Jerusalem, which is from aboue, is of all other cities and incorporations the most glorious, so it is y^e greatest priuiledge that any man can attaine, to be, of a stranger and a forreiner, admitted to be a citizen and free denizen of that societie. Thus at your request I haue giuen you a taste of the doctrine of Christian Libertie : the obedient Christian is the true free-man, euen the Lords free-man.

Nymph.

Nymph. Doubtlesse this is a most excellent point, and to the soule of a Christian exceeding comfortable: how much therefore are we bound to giue thanks to our heavenly Father, who hath *deliuered vs from the power of darknesse, and hath translated vs into the kingdom of his deare Sonne.* And I beseech God giue vs the grace, that being thus *made free from sinne*, we may become the seruants of righteousness: that so hauing our *fruite in holinesse*, the end may be *euertlasting life.* But now if it please you, I long to heare the third cause of the small regard of Preaching.

Col. 1. 13.

Rom 6. 18

Ver. 22

Epaph. The third cause of contemptuous resistance, is the iudging of that which is taught by the outward semblance of the teacher: as for example: Some great man in the world, that happily is a Magistrate, or a man of note and special reckoning in the place where he liueth, comming to the Church, and hearing his sinne repzoned, and such and such duties perswaded, straite he casteth his eye vpon the person of the speaker, and him he seeth to be but some ordinary man, one that if he should come in place where he is, should be serued as the poore

The third cause
of the dislike
of preaching.

3

Iam. 3.

man in the tozne coate, of whom S. Iames speaketh, that should bee bidden to stand there alse off, or sit here at my footstole; eftsone he beginneth to thinke with himselfe, that it would be a shame for him to suffer the words of such a one so far below him in the world, to carry so great authority with him, as that he should by and by conforme himselfe to his perswasions. Another perhaps that hath had some good education, and thereby hath gotten some taste of learning, or is otherwise by obseruation & experience growne to be a man of some reach and capacitie: he when he compareth himself with y^e teacher, seemeth to see as much (if not more) learning, iudgement, reading and vnderstanding in himselfe as in him: and therefore he sayth with himself, Why should I yeld to his instruction? why should his opinion sway so far with me, as to draw me from mine owne courses? why should not I be as wel able to iudge what is meete as he? A third, that is (it may be) some gallant, a man of spirit, that thinketh it a part of his courage to be without feare euen of God himselfe, he hearing at a sermon thus, that

threatnings denounced against sin, and against those very sins wherof his life is a continuall pleasure, in the greatnesse of his stomacke, and in the prophaneesse of his heart beginneth to set all at nought, imagining that it cannot stand with that hardinesse and vndaunted resolution which he professeth, to be strikē with the words of a silly man, or to haue his heart terrified with a few idle speeches. In a word, the people generally do not consider how well a thing is spoken, how sufficiently proued, how soundly seconded and made good by the word, this neuer entereth into their thought: but they see that he which preacheth, what is he but a man of their owne sort, one neither armed with authority to punish them, nor endued with power to constrain them, neither yet furnished with wealth to contend with them: and that al his force lyeth in his tongue, the exercise whercof when it is once past, there is all that he can do, and therefore they make a Rush at his doctrine, and say of the Preacher as they did of old, He is but wind, and what is he that he should command vs? Thus, this also is one cause of resistance

Jerem. 5. 13.

to the holy doctrine taught, men looke no higher then the man, and they value all that is sayd by the quality of the speaker.

2. Thess. 2. 13.

Nympl. This discourse of yours, so fully discovering the proud conceits of an vnreformed heart, calleth to my mind the commendation which *Paul* giueth of the *Thessalonians* *When ye receiued of vs* (saith he) *the word of the preaching of God, ye receiued it not as the word of men, but as it is indeed the word of God:* for so long as men haue no higher a concept of that which they heare, then that it is but a mans doctrine, the respect vnto it cannot choose but be very small; so that I must needs yeeld vnto you in this, that this also may well go among the number of the causes why preaching is of so slender estimation here amongst vs. Yet sir, men that are enemies in this case, do pretend other reasons, and will not be knowne of any of these to be the occasion or cause of their dislike.

Gen. 3. 7.

Epaph. That is most true, for sinne doeth euer seeke shades, and it is a tricke which we haue learned of our grandfather *Adam*, to scw figge-leaues together to couer our nakednesse. For shame men
will

will not say that they are hereby moued to dislike: yet notwithstanding these be the true grounds, and men in their consciences know it to be so. If a man had asked of Pashur why he smote Ieremie the Prophet, and put him in the stocks, no doubt but he would tell you a very small tale, as that, He prophesied against the citie: he hath not sought the wealth of the people, but the hurt: and that he discouraged the hands of the men of warre, in speaking such wordes vnto them. **This** would be Pashurs pretence, thus he would pleade for his strait courses against the poore Prophet, yet this is but a colour: for the very matter is, Ieremie was a little too bold, he spake too plaine, his sermons were like a fire, and like a hammer that breaketh the stone, he kept not a sword backe of al that the Lord commanded him. Ieremie 20. 2.
chap. 26. 11.
chap. 38. 4.
Ieremie 23. 9.

Nymph. Indeepe I haue heard much spoken by many, and diuers exceptions made against preaching, but I neuer heard any man acknowledge his dislike to proceede from any of these causes which you haue named: I wish therefore that you would instruct me how to stop the mouths

of gaine-sayers, when I light into the companie of such. They will not perhaps say much to your faces that are Preachers, but such as I am shall often heare them talke at libertie, and vtter the very bottom of their stomackes, and spend all their powder and shot to the beating downe of that which I hope they shall neuer be able to ouerthrow.

2 King 6. 16.

Jerem. 1. 19.

Epaph. Assure your selfe of that : for we may be bold to say in the comfort of a good conscience, They that be with vs, are more then they that be with them. And when we come on the same errand with Ieremie, why may we not hope vpon the same promise, They shall fight against thee but they shall not preuaile against thee, for I am with thee to deliuer thee, saith the Lord: yet notwithstanding, lest their conceits should be any hindrance to those that are well affected, or it should be an encouragement to them in their euill, when they find those that same contrary minded, vnable to answer them, therfore I do both commend your care herein, and will be as helpfull to you as I am able in opening the vanitie of their seuerall exceptions, that are enemies vnto preaching.

Nymph.

Nymph. I thanke you for it: and I trust that he which commanded *Peter* when he was himselfe conuerted, *to strengthen the brethren*, will both blesse your care to my profite, and render to you seuen fold into your bosome, the comfort that I shall receiue by your aduice. I will be bold therefore, as farre as I can call to mind, to make knowne vnto you euery thing that I haue heard objected in this case.

Luke 22 32.

Epaph. Be so, I pray you, and faile not till you be fully satisfied, to vye euery thing to the vttermost.

Nymph. You know sir that we haue in our countrie, men of diuers humours, and sundrie fashions; some grossely ignorant, and meere sottish, chiefly in matters of religion; some prophane, such as *Esau* was, who care more for a portion of meate, esteeme more of a worldly comoditie, then of a heauenly treasure; some wise and sensible, as the world calleth wisdom; some learned also, and schollers by profession: now it hath bene my hap at some one time or other, to fall into conference with euery of these sorts, and as communication draweth in one thing after another, so to find out their seuerall opinions: and though

The seuerall exceptions against preaching.

some of them be very simple, and to be called idle surmises, rather then grounded reasons, yet because you haue made me so kind an offer, you shall therefore haue all.

Epaph. Be it so, I am well contented: and because Ignorance is a mother sin, therefore let vs first heare I pray you the ignorant mans exceptions.

The ignorant
peoples excep-
tions against
preaching.

Nymph. One thing that I haue heard some ignorant men with vs alledge, is, that they can see no reason why there should be more vse of preaching now, then there hath bene in former times. They haue liued (they say) some thirtie, some fortie, some more yeares without a settled ministry, hauiug onely (vnlesse it were now or then at times) the ordinary seruice read among them; and all this while they felt no want of that which is now called teaching, and therefore they are minded not to esteeme that much for the remainder of their life, without which they haue liued and done wel enough hitherto. How like you this fir? is not this a profound reason? Is not here good Diuinitie?

Epaph. Indee you may well call this the ignorant mans reason, it is so grosse, hauiug in it but three errors, which

which you know is nothing to speake of in so short an allegation. First of all, they wil neglect preaching now, because they haue liued without it hitherto: as though it were wisdomē for a man in his old or middle age, to refuse a kindnesse offered, because in his youth or childhood he had no meanes to enioy it. Had it bene a good reason for Paul, when Christ called him from heauen, to haue said, *But* it is now too late, I am a man that haue spent the best part of my time without the knowledge of thee & of thy religion, & therefore I pray thee trouble me not now, I hope to shift out as wel for so much of my life as is behind, as I haue done to this day. No man will be so without comon sense, as to say, that Paul might iustly haue refused vpon such a pretence: and yet it had bin as good a reason as theirs. Secondly they erre in this, in that they account the time of their ignorance to haue bin without danger, because they neuer saw the danger. Alas, little do they consider the extreme nusery of those times. Christ saith *John 12. 35.* that he that walketh in the darke, namely without the bright shining light of Gods holy word knowes not whither he goeth:

Ephes. 4. 18.

Ephes. 2. 2.

Ephes. 5. 14.

Ezech. 3. 31.

A. A. 2. 40.

he is euen in the valley of the shadow of death, a stranger from the life of God, walking after the course of this world, and after the prince that ruleth in the ayre, euen the spirit that worketh in the children of disobedience. A man that hath bene in a swoond, and is awaked out of it by the paines of his friends, he will tel you how pleasing the Dumber therof seemed to his senses, and at the first beginning to be awaked, he will say perhaps, You should haue let me alone, why did you trouble me? But when he is better aduised, he wil thank them that brought him again, because he knoweth that if he had bene let alone, it might haue cost him his life. So in this case, a man liuing in blindness and grosse ignorance, seemeth to himselfe for the present to be in a maruellous good state, and his soule in as good as any mans; and when the Preacher shall cry vnto him, Awake thou that sleepest, and stand vp from the dead: O thou ignorant person, Why wilt thou die? saue thy self from this froward generation. Like enough he wil say, O P. Preacher, trouble me not I pray you, spare your selfe, I am well enough, my soule is in

no such danger: but if the Lord once open his eyes, and make him a new heart and a new spirit, then he wil blesse God for him that called him, because he will then perceiue, that otherwise he had euen runned on to his owne destruction. He that tra- uelleth by night vpon the edge and hanging of a steep hil, from which if he should fall he must needs breake his neck, goeth on without feare, because in the darke he seeth not the danger: but let him be brought back at light of day, it wil make him euen quake to thinke vpon the peril he was in, & wonder that euer he should escape it. In like sort, he that is in the blindness of ignorance without y^e word, the same is hourly ready to fall into the pit of hell; yet he feareth it not, because he seeth it not: but if euer he haue any remoyce by the light of the Gospel shining in his heart, it wil terrifie him to remember his former misery, and make his belly to tremble to consider it: so that here is the second error in this ignorant ob- iection. Then conclude there was no dan- ger in the dayes of blindness, because they saw no danger, whereas indeed the danger was so much the greater.

Ezech. 18. 31.

3. A third error; there is yet in this exception, & that is, that they consider not how that the refusal of Gods mercy which is freely offered in the preaching of y^e word, both double their sinne, and make their condemnation more iust by whom it is refused. If I had not come and spoken vnto them, they should not haue had sin, (sayth our Saviour) that is, they had not bene chargeable with this sinne of contempt of me and of my doctrine: But now haue they no cloke for their sin, now they haue nothing to plead for excuse. If this were duly thought vpon, that the neglect of the word, when the meanes of making the same familiar vnto them is become common among them, did make them guilty of a greater sin befoze God, men would then not dare like the deafe Adder to stop their eares, and to suffer the holy doctrine of God to fall to the ground vnregarded. Thus I hope I haue shewed the vnreasonablenesse of this first reason.

Nymph. This that you haue spoken as it maketh me see plainly the idlenesse of this ignorant exception, so it calleth to my remembrance a notable place of scripture which I once heard you alleage in one of
you

your sermons to this or the like purpose:

it is a part of *Paul* his speech at Athens.

The time of this ignorance (saith he) *God* Ac 17. 30.
lightly passing over, now he admonisheth all men in *euery where to repent.* It seemeth to me that
this place may be applied fitly to this mat-
ter.

Epaph. It is well remembered: for
indeed that speech fitteth well with this
point. *Paul* there disputing with the hea-
then that worshipped dumbe idols, and
thought the Godhead to be like gold or
silver, or stone, grauen by the art and in-
uention of man: least they should object
noueltie vnto him, and should say as the
Papists do at this day, how was it possi-
ble that all the world should for so many
yeares be deceined: he telleth them that
it seemed good vnto God, for causes best
knowne vnto himselfe, to permit the ig-
norance of so many thousandes of yeares,
yet so as that time of blindness be-
ing now determined, men should not
pleade prescription, reckoning most of
an old error the of newly revealed truth:
but should open their eares and harts to
this his generall summons to repentance.
I thank you for minding me of this place:

it sheweth notably what a fond thing it is, not to take notice of the truth reuealed, but to pzeferre a long continued ignorance befoze it. Haue you any more exceptions of this nature, forged in the shop of ignorance: like enough you haue; for it is an old and a true saying, that error is infinite, though truth be but one. If this that you haue named haue any moe fellows, bring them forth; I doubt not, but by the grace of Christ to discountenance them.

- Nymph.* Yes sure: when the multitude heare it taught, that the preaching of the word is a thing of that nature and necessarie vse, that without it men ordinarily can not be saued, they crie out by and by; And
2. what is then become of our forefathers, they had no preaching, yet they were in their times good people, honest, and well esteemed in the places where they liued.
 3. If we should then yeeld to this, that this preaching is with so reuerent a regard to be depended vpon, we must needs condemne our progenitors out of whose loyns we are come, which to doe were more then inhumanitie. I can tell you fir, this is an argument that hath a generall approbation.
- and

and therefore I pray you looke well to it that you can answer it.

Epaph. Well, as hard as it is, yet it is not so intricate as was Sampsons riddle, Iudg. 14. 12. that in seuen dayes could not be interpreted, for indeed it is of no value. It is true, we are both by nature and by religion to honoꝝ the memoꝛies of our auncestors, and in all good things to be imitators of them; but in maters of religion we are not to haue an eye to them oꝝ to their times, but we must consider what it is which the Lord requireth at our hands. Whether they were saued oꝝ no, it is not for vs to enquire: if the Lord haue dealt moꝝe mercifully with vs then he did with them, we haue cause to magnifie his help name, to looke to our selues that we despise not the riches of his bountie, and to leaue them to the Lord to whom they stand oꝝ fall. It is a good saying of an auncient father to this purpose: If my predecessors (sayth he) either Cypr. li. 2. ep. 3. by ignorance or by simplicitie haue not kept and holden that which our Lord hath taught them by his example and authority, the mercy of our Lord might pardon them. But as the good Doctor saith, We cannot

hope for the like, hauing better meanes of instruction. When the outward ordinary meanes failed, Gods hand was not shortned, but he was able euen in the middest of blindnesse to saue these which belonged to the election of grace. As for vs, it shall not be safe for vs to neglect this so great saluation, or to receiue the grace of God in vaine, foolishly aduenturing our selues vpon the vnknewne condition of our forefathers. And this I hope may suffice to take away the edge of this fancie. It is humanitie to thinke the best of our forefathers, but it is diuinitie to looke carefully to our selues.

Ans. I am glad you haue furnished me with so sufficient an answer to this exception which I haue bene often assaulted with; and indeed because of the common instinct of nature, it striketh the deeper impression, and is the more hardly remoued. But I thinke this that you haue said may preuaile there where obstinate wilfulnesse hath not gotten the mastery: and therefore I will lay this vp as safely as euer Goliath his sword was layed vp; that I may euer haue it in a readinesse for such a purpose. But first there are yet more obiections of the same stamp.

Heb. 2. 1.
2. Cor. 6. 11

Sam. 21.

stampe, which I must entreate you also to cleare, that so you may make me a perfect scholler in this point.

Epaph. Who would think it possible that men so dull and vncapable in matters which concerne their greatest good, should be abounding with arguments wherewith to pleade euen against their owne soules. But the diuell is a cunning instructor, and laboꝛeth to strengthen men in ignoꝛance (because it is the step-ter of his kingdome) as much as it is possible. Let vs heare therefore what the ignoꝛant, with whom it hath bene your hap to conuerse, haue yet further to alleage.

Nymphus. They say that the most learned of you all, who are called Preachers, when you haue shewed the vttermost of your cunning, can say no more then they know already; namely, that they must loue God aboue all, and their neighbours as themselves: and seeing they know this well enough already, what needeth (say they) any more instruction.

Epaphras. This is a conceipt scarce woꝛthy the confuting: yet lest my silence should bꝛeede an opinion in you, that

there is more in it then in dede there is;
 do but consider of it by the like: If a man
 speaking of husbandrie, and hearing a
 nother to discourse of the great skill and
 long experience that is requisit to make
 a man a good husband, should say by and
 by, Tush, what talke you so much of skil
 and knowledge herein? Why? It is no-
 thing but this, to plow, to sow, and to
 reape: should not such a one deservedly
 be laughed at, and be a scoone to those
 which heare him? Yes, and not without
 cause: for euery man knoweth, that
 though this be the sum of husbandry, yet
 there are diuers particulars belonging
 to these, which are neither sone learned
 nor easily practised: so that he who de-
 sireth to be a good husband, and to profit
 by his labors, and to make the best of e-
 uery thing, must not satisfie himselfe to
 know this, that there is nothing in hus-
 bandry but to care the land, and to reape
 the fruite, but he must learne also what
 belongeth to the right performance of
 these, otherwise he may erre in sowing,
 play the foole in plowing, and come
 short in reaping. And euen so it is in this
 case: true it is, that the summe of all re-
 ligious

ligion consisteth in this, in louing God aboue all, and a mans neighbor as himselfe: but what then? If a man shall thinke by and by that he is a good Christian, and knoweth enough, because he apprehendeth these generals, the same is exceedingly deceiued, for there are many other branches belonging to each of these, which vnlesse a man do know, he can neither loue God as he ought, nor his neighbour as he should: so that to my seeming, euery common reason is sufficient to conuince mens ignorance herein. There is not the meanest profession, the courtest trade, the plainest occupation, but it hath (as we say) a certaine myserie in it, there are many rules belonging to it: which must be knowne, not in grosse onely, but euery very precisely, before a man can in any mediocritie practise the duties of the same.

Nymphas. It is true that you say, for mine owne part I confesse it: but yet Ignorance will replie and say, Will you then vrge vpon euery common man the knowledge of euery point which in preaching you deliuer: that seemeth very

unreasonable; neither can men that want the helpes of learning attaine vnto it: and will not a good meaning make a supply for all this?

Epaphras. How unreasonable it may seeme in mens eyes to be vrged to such exact knowledge, I cannot tel: this I am sure of, that we that are Ministers, are charged to shew the people the whole counsel of God, & not to keep a word back. If we cannot be dispensed with to keepe secret any thing, how shal it be tolerated in the people to neglect the knowledge of that; which we are bound by vertue of our commission to deliuer? It was but an idle prayer of the Apostle, on the behalfe of the Colossians, to begge of God that they might be fulfilled with knowledge of Gods will, in all wisdom and spirituall vnderstanding: or for the Philippians, that they might abound in all iudgement, and discern things that differ. I say these were but idle wishes, if so be that full measure of knowledge is not required of euery Christian. And if some certain rudiments, & as it were shreds of knowledge were sufficient, the Hebrews might well haue complained of wrong,

Act. 20. 27.
1 Tim. 4. 13.

Col. 1. 9

Phil. 1. 9. 10

in that they were so sharply censured for
 their being dull of hearing, and for that Hebr. 5. 11. 12
 they still after so much teaching needed
 the first principles of the word of God. And
 sure, if it be unreasonable to urge men to
 know so much, we must (which were
 blasphemie) challenge the wise God as
 an unnecessary burdener of mankind,
 who hath revealed so much. As it is cu-
 riositie to enquire into that which God
 hath concealed, so it is vnthankfulnessse
 not to take notice of whatsoeuer he hath
 left written for our learning. The secret Rom. 16. 25
 things belong to the Lord our God, but Deuter. 29. 29
 the things revealed belong to vs and to
 our children for euer, sayth the Scripture.
 I confesse, that if a man might attaine
 to the age of Methuselah who liued nine
 hundred fixtie and nine yeares, and should
 in that space equall his diligence in scar-
 ching the scripture vnto David, who
 made it his meditation continually, yet
 many things would escape him, and
 he should when he had done all, be faine
 to confesse, that the greatest part of that
 which he knoweth, is not the least part
 of that which he knoweth not: but what
 then? because a man when he hath done

best cannot know all, shall he therefore not labour to know any thing? God so bid. Ignorance by a kind of necessity may seeme to haue some excuse, but a voluntary neglect of that which a man may know, cannot haue so much as a colour of allowance.

Nymphas. Yet me thinkes it is hard for the common people (the greatest part whereof cannot so much as reade) to attain to so much knowledge as you seeme to perswade, especially if withall they be such as liue by their labour, and haue charge of children, how shall they spare time for such occasions?

Epaph. Clerily it is a wofull thing to consider the dulnesse that is amongst men; and they do not know what they want that cannot reade (a thing which notwithstanding of all other the parts of learning is the most case, and as soone learned as to be able to play at the cards, if men were as desirous of the one as of the other): yet howsoeuer, in this case of knowledge in religion men do cast many mo perils then they need, and are like the slothfull man, of whom Salomon speaketh, who saith, A lion is without, I shall be flaine

flaine in the streete. For knowledge is easie to him that will vnderstand : and the yoke of **Christ**, it is easie, and his burden light: wherefore serueth the scripture but to giue vnto the simple sharpnesse of wit, and to the child knowledge and discretiō? The entrance into thy words (saith David) sheweth light: as sone as a man in humilitie, and in a true desire to know God, doeth but begin to apply himselfe to the meanes of knowledge, he shall secretly feele such a sodaine light cast in vpon his vnderstanding, that he shall be able to apprehend euen the very secret of the Lord, and the great mystery of godlinesse; and so shall go from strength to strength, vntill he be filled with all the fulnesse of God. And we see by comfortable experience, with what gifts of iudgement and good vnderstanding and speech, yea and of prayer also, the Lord furnisheth many, who notwithstanding haue wanted the helpes of good education: wherein the Lord maketh good that auncient prophesie touching the kingdome of **Christ**, that he would in it poure out his spirit euen vpon seruants and maides, so that the eyes of the blind should be lightened, and the

Prove. b. 14. 6.

Mathew 11. 30

Proverb 14.

Psalme 112. 1. 2.

Isaiah 25. 12

1. Timoth. 3. 16

Isaiah 84. 7

1. Peter 3. 19.

Isaiah 1. 1.

Ez. 40. 35. 36.

2 Cor. 9. 15.

Mat. 16. 25.

Proverb. 10. 22.

Phil. 3. 19.

Col. 3. 2.

Proverb. 8. 18.

Ephes. 3. 8.

2 Thes. 3. 10.

eares of the deafe opened, and the dumbe
 mans tongue be able to sing. **And** thankes
 be vnto God for his vnspokeable gift. **So**
 that it is a causelesse feare which men
 haue, who imagine the knowledge of the
 doctrine of saluation, to be a matter of
 that exceeding difficultie. Now for the
 multitude of worldly busineses, the ne-
 cessary following whereof men pleade
 partly as a matter priuiledging them,
 partly as a thing hindring them from
 intending these better occasions: if men
 had learned what this is, Seeke ye first
 the kingdome of God, and his righteouf-
 nesse, and all these things shall be ministred
 vnto you: **or this**, What shal it profit a man
 though he should win the whole world, if
 he lose his owne soule? **then they would be**
 ashamed either to thinke religion a hin-
 drance to their worldly thyring, it being
 a furtherance rather, because it is the
 blessing of the Lord which maketh rich)
or else to mind onely earthly things, **spen-**
ding all their time about that which is
 on the earth, and neglecting that durable
 riches, euen the vnsearchable riches of
 Christ. **I know the businesse of the world**
must be followed; He that laboureth not,
 let

let him not eate, **saith Paul:** and if there be any that prouideth not for his owne, and namely for them of his household, he denieth the faith, and is worse then an infidell.

Yet I know too, that he who will walke circumspectly, not as a foole, but as a wise Christian, must redeeme the time, and in

the midst of his worldly employments remember that one needfull thing, which when al other commodities become that

which they are, euen nothing, will tary by him, and shall neuer be taken from him.

Moreover, put case a man be either so tied by the nature and quality of his calling, that he can spare no time (so as among others, day-laboyers and other poorer trades-men seeme to be) or else is destitute of meanes to further his knowledge when he is priuate and at home, yet if a man would be conscionably careful of profitable spending the Sabbath day, learning euery such day, though but one point, and caring to keepe it and to hide it in the heart, and to ponder it in the weeke following, that he may by that means make it his owne, it is incredible to a man that trieth it not, to what store of spirituall knowledge euen a common

1. Timoth. 5. 8.

Ephes. 5. 15. 16.

Luke 10. 42.

Proverb. 13. 5.

Psalm 119. 11

Luke 2. 12.

Ephes. 3. 4

man shall attaine, and what vnderstanding he shall haue in the myttery of Christ. We haue a saying touching earthly things, that light gaines make heauy purses: we shall surely find it true in this, he that shall labour to grow richer euery Sabbath but by one point, he shall be fore he is ware of it grow to a very comfortable portion of the sauing knowledge of Gods truth.

Nymph. I haue very carefully attended to this which you haue spoken, and I praise God I find much comfort in it; yet there is one thing behind which I haue still looked for, which I am bold to put you in mind of, lest you should forget it, and that is touching the good meaning which the common sort so much trust vnto: they say their heart is good though their skill be small, and they hope that God will accept it. I pray you satisfie me in this also, and then I shall be reasonably furnished against the plea of the ignorant.

Luke 8. 15.

Epaph. You do well to mind me of it, howsoever I was euen now of my selfe comming to it: An honest and good heart is a thing in the eyes of God much esteemed; and it is the especiall thing he craveth

ueth of vs , to giue him our heart: yet generally that which men call a good heart to God-ward, is nothing lesse then that which it is called : for so long as a mans heart is a dull , ignozant , vnregenerate and vnrefozmed heart , it is wicked about all things . There can be no goodnesse in that heart where there dwelleth grosse & blockish ignozance of God and of his truth : It is no good heart which loueth foolishnes and hateth knowledge, and casteth the word of God behind it. It is no good heart which maketh not the mouth to speake out of the abundance of it, and to be able to giue a reason of the hope that is in it. There may be a zeale of God, where there is no knowledge of God; but it is but a blind zeale, and God esteemeth it not. They which kil and persecute Gods seruants , may haue a kind of god meaning , and may thinke that in so doing they do God seruice, yet this cannot helpe them , so that men are deceived in their god meaning: for no meaning is god, but that which is guided by knowledge: yea though the thing meant be in it owne nature good, yet if the manner be not assured of the goodnesse of it

Proverb. 23. 26.

Ier. 17. 9.

Proverbs 1. 22.

Psalm 50. 17.

Mathew. 12. 34.

1. Pet. 3. 15.

Rom. 10. 2.

1. John 16. 2.

Roman. 14. 23. frō Gods word, his meaning is naught,
 & that by the the rule of Scripture, which
 telleth vs, that whatloeuer is not of faith
 is sinne.

Peck. of Cath. *Nymph.* I must needs yeeld to this that
 you say, that it is true; and yet me thinkes
 it is something hard: for I remember I haue
 read in a good author (whose iudgement I
 thinke you will also approue of) that there
 are many, who though they are ignorant
 in many things, yet they haue a meaning
 of true faith, and that which is wanting in
 knowledge is supplied in affection: this is
 a very comfortable saying, and to my see-
 ming also it doeth something fauour the
 conceit which men haue of being excused
 by their good meaning.

Whit. de Sacra
Script. Quest. 2. *Epaph.* I do approue of the autho:
 you alleage, as of a worthy instrument
 in Gods Church: I agree also to that
 which you haue cited out of his writ-
 ings: for (as he also saith) all men haue
 not that sharpnesse of conceit, and fast-
 nesse of memozie, to be able to wade into
 the depth of enery point, and to remem-
 ber enery particular: And indeed an exact
 knowledge of the misteries of religion, so
 as to be able to dispute schollerly of them

is not required of euery common man: to
 which end is the speech of S. Augustine;
 It is not (saith he) the quicknesse of vnder-
 standing, but the simplicitie of beleeuing
 which is safest for the people: all this is
 true, but yet it maketh nothing for the
 defence of that brutish ignorance which
 men seeke to colour with the pretence of
 a good meaning: for this rule, that good
 affection supplieth the want of know-
 ledge, holdeth onely in those who hauing
 in some small measure felt the sweetnesse
 of knowledge, do laboꝝ to increase in it.
 In such it is true, that the sinceritie of the
 heart maketh a kind of recompence for
 the defect of knowledge: but where there
 is a setting of a mans self vpon the dyeggs
 of ignorance, without grieuing and sor-
 rowing for his owne dulnesse, without
 caring & endeuoring to thꝛiue in know-
 ledge, there this rule hath no place, there
 the pretended good meaning is but sot-
 tishnesse, and that kind of ignorance ma-
 keth a man a stranger fꝛo the life of God.
 And therefore it is well said of a learned
 man, that whereas God forgiveth mani-
 fold ignorances in his children, yet he re-
 quireth that we be teachable, and not

August. in lib.
 contra Iulian.
 lib. 4. cap. 4.

1. 2. 3.

Melancthon.

hardned in our owne dulnesse and sluggishnesse.

Nymphas. You haue fully satisfied me touching this doubt : there is onely one thing more behind , which ignorance pretendeth , and it is common in many mens mouthes : let them (say they) preach and we will pray : they hope their deuotion in praying will do them more good then all your preaching.

Epaph. It is a world to see the cunning of the diuell , who goeth about to overthrow one holy dutie by another, and to oppose those things which ought to go as it were hand in hand together . But what thing is there so senselesse, whereto ignorance in the Scripture may not be perswaded? It is our English prouerbe, The blind catcheth many a flie : and so indeede the ignorant in the booke of God embrace many grosse and ridiculous absurdities : so; if men knew what the Scripture saith in this case , they would neuer cast out such an idle speech : Solomon saith , He that turneth away his care from hearing the law , euen his prayer shall be abominable. What thinke you shall become of their prayers then who
resolue

resolue not to affoord the vse of their eares vnto Gods word? Do they not make a faire hand, when by their contempt of preaching they bring a curse vpon their praying? Adde hitherto that Paul sayth expressly, that as men cannot Rom. 10.14 call on him in whom they haue not beleeued, so neither can they belecue without hearing, nor heare without a Preacher. Can men credite Paul in this, and yet thinke to pray well without the helpe of preaching? Surely no. How can men pray aright, without knowledge of their owne wants, without the apprehension of the promises of God, vpon which to build their assurance to be heard: and how can they attaine to either of these ordinarily, but by the preaching, expounding, opening & applying of Gods word? That which men commonly call praying, is but a lip-laboz, consisting in the recitall of a few words, the sense & meaning whereof is not vnderstood, and it is mere babling in the eares of God; it may be well called the sacrifice of fooles: Eccles 4.17. and it may truly be said of such blind deuotions and tongue-prayers, which the heart doeth not conceiue, as it was sayd

Isa 1. 14.

of the hypocriticall ceremoniousnesse of the Jewes; The soule of the Lord hateth them, they are a burden vnto him, he is wearie to beare them. **I thinke I haue sufficiently discovered the weaknesse of this silly obiection.**

Nymph. I praise God I do also see the vanitie of it; and I hope I for my part shall learne so to esteeme of preaching, as that I shall also reuerence that good meanes which God hath in his wisdom ordained for my help in the performance of that holy dutie, that so by often hearing I may learne to pray, and by praying I may make good vse of the things I heare. Well sir, now that you haue armed me against the common pretences of the ignorant sort, whereby they make themselves belecue, or rather are made belecue by the diuell, that it is no daunger to contemne preaching. I must challenge your promise, and craue your helpe also touching another sort of men, who as they are ignorant in the matters of God, so are they come to a higher degree of hardnesse, and haue euen almost taken vp their seate *in the chaire of scorner*s, and do not onely not regard preaching (which is the fault of those
of

Psal. 1. 1.

of whom I have spoken hitherto) but scoffe at it, and endeavour by lading it with sundry reproaches altogether to disgrace it.

Epaph. I am as willing to perfozme my promise as I was to make it; and yet I know that in regard of these prophane ones themselves, this will be but a thanklesse peece of service: for a scorner loueth not him that rebuketh him, neither will he go vnto the wise. Therefore I will do it rather in desire to satisfie you, then in any great hope I have to reclaime them.

Proverb. 15. 32.

Nymph. Indeed I haue sometimes cast in a word according to my skill, when I haue bene in the companie of such; and they haue for the most part still shewed themselves like the foole, who *maketh a mocke of sin*, to whom *it is euen a pastime to do wickedly*: yet it is good to be able sometimes to answer them according to their foolishnesse, *least they should be wise in their owne conceit*. Wel then, to come to the matter without circumstance, the exceptions of profane men against preaching are diuers, some against the persons of the preachers, some against the hearers, some otherwise,

Proverb. 14. 9.

Proverb. 10. 13

Proverbs 26. 5

The objections of prophane men against preaching.

as you shal vnderstand in seuerall, First, touching you that are the preachers, it is common in their mouthes: Who be worse then they? If there be any couetoulines, or pride, or ambition, & the like, where shal you find it but in the Clergie? When they are in the pulpit, they must needs say somewhat; and therefore, though when they be there, they be very hote and eager against vice, yet in their owne courses they are as bad or worse then other men. This is one exception.

Epaph. The answer to this wretched exception (not for the waight of argument y^t it carieth, but for the variety of leudnes & erro^r which is in it) wil diuide it self into many particulars. First of all therefore, touching them that obiect this, they are very properly by a learned man of our times compared to foule gamesters, who when they haue lost all at the cards, and haue the last dealing in their hands, and perceiue that not likely to proue to their mind, rise bp in a chafe and sling downe all, and say there hath bene foule play playd, when indeed the fault is chiefly in themselves: so many being naught themselves, & being (as the Apostle speaketh) damned by their owne consciences, when they

M. Greenham.

they haue no other Shift, crie out vpon
Preachers, thereby to cloke their owne
iniquity: therein not much vnlike to him
that in a thzong at a fair or market, bids
men beware of the Cut-purse, that he in
the meane time (being a man of y^e trade)
may practise his diuing into mens poc-
kets with the lesse suspicion. And marke
it when you will, you shall neuer find
them any other then mere sensual men,
yea and for the most part openly noted
for some one bad course or other, of Drun-
kenesse, oppression, vsury, conctousnes,
adultery, or the like, that make this ob-
iection. Secondly, (because there may be
truth in an obiection, though there be lit-
tle truth or honestie in him that maketh
it) know this therefore for the substance
of this cauill, that put case it were so,
(which thanks be to God is not so) that
all Preachers did confute their owne
sermons with their euill life, and had
Esaus hands with Iacobs voice, and
were like a file which smotheth other
thinges, it selfe remayning rough:
yet this could make nothing against
preaching. For is Physicke naught, y^e
because many Physicians perhappes

hae contrary to their owne rules of phisicke? 2^d is law damnable, because some professors thereof do liue lawlesse, giuing rules of equity to others, themselues keeping none but ill rule? No man wil be so without sense to affirme it: why thē? What the course of preaching be cōdemned, for the supposed misdemeano^r of them which preach? God so bid. Is any mā so vnwise as to disobey a warrant comming apparently frō a man of authority, because the Constable or Litchingman is a naughty fellow that bringeth it? Who then but either a scōle or a froward hart wil tread the holy doctrine of God vnder his fete, because he is a man of no god cariage that deliuereth the same? Thirdly, men are to consider this also, that all are not Ministers which are so called, neither all true Preachers come frō God that stand vp in y^e pulpit: for in these corrupt times many are crept into the Church of God by the window, whom God did neuer set apart to that holy seruice: now it is vnpossible but that such as these (though they may a long time couer their double iniquity vnder a dissembled sanctitie) yet at last breake out into extremities. Now
it

*Some here say
that it is a
double sin.*

it is against common reason to turne their miscarriage into the generall disgrace of all honest Ministers. There be many counterfeite dog-leaches and pretended Surgions, that hauing gotten a litle Kubarbe or Balsamum, and some few words of art, run about the country and beguile the people, and cozen them of their mony, purging their purses and scouring their bags vnder colour of cleansing their bodies & searching their sores. Shall we say therefore that all Physicians though they be neuer so well learned, neuer so well experienced, neuer so conscionable and wary in their courses of administring, are cozeners, and that it were pittie but the countrey were rid of them all? it were an indignitie once to imagine it. There is no profession, but it hath as it were a certaine scunime, and there are some that make shew of it, that are altogether vnworthy of it. Shall the vilenesse & vnbecoming carriage of those that are but the refuse, and as I may so speake the taile of an honest profession, be cast into the face of all the rest that belong vnto it? Reason it selfe sayth it is vnmete. And men would soone yeld to

this, were it not that the diuell hath taught them to be wise in any thing, sauing in religion, to fauor any profession sauing that of the ministry. Men are hereinlike vnto many Lawyers, who if you put them a case, without naming the parties, will tell you truly what is law: but whē they vnderstand who they be whō the matter concerneth, then they change their opinion, and the law is altered. So in the world, ask you any man of cōmon vnderstanding this questiō, whether it be meet that all of a trade or company should be chalenged, because some such or such are woꝛthy to be punished: he will tell you there is no reason for it: but come to particulars touching pꝛeachers, thē he is of another mind, he wil be ready to say y^e al Chꝛists disciples were naught because Iudas was a diuell: & because he (it may be) knoweth some two or 3. s^r Iohns or some other (perhaps of better note in y^e eyes of the world, but yet scarcely woꝛthy of their places) to be cliuing with Diotrefes, or embracing this present world with *Demas*, or carying themselues insolently with *Pashur*, or otherwise keeping bad rule with him, who imagining that

Iohn 6.70.

Iohn 9
2. Timoth 4.10.

Ierem 20.1.3.

that his master doth defer his coming, be- Luke 12.45.
gins to limite the seruants and the maidens,
and to eate and drinke and to be drunken:
by and by he concludeth, that they are all
naught, and boweth that he will neuer
belæue any of them, for all their shewes
of holinesse. Fourthly, for the further clea-
ring of this point, this is also to be consi-
dered, that Ministers and Preachers do
not thinke themselves freed from com-
mon infirmities, or endued with some
greater power or larger priuiledge a-
gainst sin, then others: & therefore euery
slip is not by & by to be taken hold of (as
the maner is) and to be turned to the ble-
mishing of a whole profession. He is said
to be a man of vp̄right conuersation, not
who slippeth neuer, for who is he that
can vnderstand his faults?) but he who by Psalm 19.1.7.
his seldome slips, and by his not conti-
nuing in any one knowne euill, shew-
eth himselfe to be a man that vnfainedly
desireth to haue his carriage such, as be- Phil. 1.27.
cometh the Gospel of Christ. Lastly, mark
this also & you shal find it true, those who
are euer harping vpon this string, touch-
ing y^e liues of preachers, let the be vrged
to particulars, you shal perceiue y^e either

their euill speaking is occasioned by such kind of Ministers as I befoze named, or else if they haue any exception against any of the better and painfuller sozt, it is such, which if it be well examined and thzoughly looked into, will be found rather to sauoz of malice in the speaker, then to argue any great erroz in the accused. I told you I should be long in this point, but now I haue done, vnlesse you haue ought further to bzge therein.

Nymph. The most that I haue to say, is, that men of the world that shall heare this Plea of yours, will straightway say, that you can speake well for your selues, and that though you aggrauate other mens sins vpon occasions, yet you can salue vp matters that concerne your selues, and helpe to couer your owne infirmities.

Epaph. The diuell doth well answer his name; for there is nothing can be so wel spoken, but he and his can cauil at it: for mine owne part, I strue with my self to speake vnpartially. The pzofession I must loue, because God hath called me vnto it; yet were I not of it, God hath taught me to honoz it, because the feet of them are beautifull which bring glad tidings

dings of peace. And howsoever many do so far exalt themselves in their birth, in their riches, in their wisdom, in their personage and blood, that they think it a disparagement unto them to consecrate all their life to the ministerie of the Gospel: yet as Christ himselfe disdained not the title of a Minister, so among all the titles of kingdomes and countries, this was to that great King the most honorable, Solomon the Preacher. I must therefore as a Minister, but especially as a Christian, endeavour to maintaine the credit of the ministry. And yet I am not so carried away with a humour of magnifying the profession, but that I do see and bemoane both mine and other mens imperfections. I know, that though it be true, that we are many times slandered by foule mouthes, yet we often faile, and give great offence euen unto those that feare God, who depending vpon vs, are either grieved in heart, or (which is worse) grievously misled, by our want of watchfulnesse ouer our selues. And I heartily beg of God so to stablish vs in euery word and good work, that while we liue we may be an example to them that

Romanes 8.

1. Peter 5.

2. Th 2. 17.

1. Timothy 4. 12

Hebr. 3. 17.

belceue: and when we haue finished our course, the people may haue cause to remember vs, & to follow our faith, considering what hath bin the end of our conuersation.

Nymph. My heart saith Amen vnto your good praiser: and God forgine vs our backwardnes in that we make so seldom mentio of you which are our Ministers in our prayers vnto him. But now to the next exceptio which is against the hearers; the common saying is, that there are none vtually so bad as these Puritanes for so in their ignorance, not knowing truly what a Puritane is, and in their malice seeking to disgrace honest men, they terme euery mā that makes conscience of hearing the word, for the building of himself *(in holy faith)* they are nothing but a pack of hypocrites, men that are not to be trusted for all their faire shewes, holy horses, and the like names of disgrace, which hell can inuent: and out of this puddle of reprochfull speecches against the louers of preaching, they gather vp filth to cast into the face of preaching it selfe.

Iude 10.

Epaph. This exception, and that which went next befoze, are so wel like, y they do easily appære to haue had one father, euen the diuel, who was a slanderer from
the

the beginning: but blessed be God that it is no matter of any great difficultie to discover, even the deepenesse of Satan to be more simplicitie. *Reuel 2. 24.* First then, for this touching the hypocrisie of our hearers, it is but a more slander; for (to the glory of God be it spokē) there are many of those that reuerence this so much contemned course of preaching, who haue not onely a shew of godlinesse, but do also feeble the power thereof; and are careful, as they beleeue in God, so to shew forth good works; so that their liues do adorne the doctrine of God our Sauer, yea and (which is the cause of y^e so great malice of the vngodly) eue reprove the leudnes of the irreligious. *Tit 2. 2.*
Tit 2. 10. Secondly, suppose it to be so as it may well, hypocrites mingling themselves with the soundest Christians) that some of those which cary a face of holinesse and zeale, & loue to the word, do notwithstanding hold fellowship with the vnfuitfull workes of darknesse, liuing after the lusts of men, and running with the wicked to the same excesse of riot; yet who is able to say that euer they receiued any encouragement by preaching so to do: Hath that taught them any such matter, and not rather the cleane contrary? Let malice speake, *Ephes 5. 11.*
1. Pet. 4. 1. 3.

1. Thessal. 4. 16.

Ephes. 5. 6.

1. Sam. 5. 2. 4.

if it be not constrained for very shame to keep silence. Doth the preacher perswade any man to be an usurer, an oppressor, a hard dealer, a drunkard, a whoremaster, or the like? Nay it is well knowne, that it testifieth to one & other, that the Lord is auenger of all such things. & that for them his wrath commeth vpon the children of disobedience. These two things, namely the falshood of the exception, and the bad consequence of it, if it were true, may stop their mouthes which vse it: but you told me (as I remember) that there be sundry arguments of this kind. I pray you let vs heare them: no doubt you shall see them all when they are arraigned and brought to receiue their trial at the Tribunal seat of Gods word, to be condemned for lying vanities, and to be no more able to stand before it, than the Philistines Dagon could keepe his shrine (though no doubt he was fast nailed to it) when the arke of Iehouah came in place.

Nymph. The next exception is of a larger scope, and fighteth against you with the generall wretchednesse of this last generation. You shall see it in it owne likeness, that you may the better iudge of it.

It

It commonly runneth thus: in former times when there was lesse preaching, and the Scripture was more geason then now it is, the world (they say) was much better, there was more loue, more hospitalitie, more truth, more mercie, more good dealing amongst men then is to be found at this day: so that whereas there is now much lawing, much contention, much oppressing, much cruelty, and sinnes of the like nature, al this is layd vpon the backe of preaching: this is the leauen that hath put the whole world out of taste; this is also a peece of Dagon's stump. I make no doubt but the Lord hath furnished you with weapons mightie through him, to cast downe holds, and enery high thing that is exalted against the knowledge of Christ Iesus.

2. Cor. 10. 4, 5

Epaph. I perceiue the Diuell much doubteth the ruine of his kingdome: and therfore though preaching amongst men is thought to be but wind, yet he feeleth his state begin to totter with the power of it, so that he doeth stretch his wit, and set his pollicy on worke, and spareth for no engines to beat downe that which he shal neuer be able to ouerturne. And that as we haue seene hitherto, so I doubt not

Ierem 5. 13

but we shall further see it in the examination of particulars. For those elder times (as men call them) first it is to be noted, that it is true indeed that many of those who lived in the, were in the eyes of men very commendable for those moztall vertues (as they are termed) of hospitalitie, of bountie, of humanity, of plain dealing, & the like: the reason was this, Satan let them alone in these things, because he did hold them captiue at his will in the principal. Though he doth hate these specialties in their owne nature, being an vtter enemy to all goodnesse, yet he was content to giue way in those lesser things, so long as he could nuzle them in ignorance of God and of his word, which he well knew was both hold enough for himself, and sufficient inough also to blemish and disgrace all those reputed vertues before God. But now the light of knowledge being come into the world and spreading it self further by the more common vse of preaching, Satan secretly perswadeth many, that it is enough for them to haue knowledge, though they neglect practise: & he laboureth also by killing mens care to shew themselves forward in these duties
of

of ciuilitie, to lessen the credit of the Gospel, & to haue matter of slander against the knowledge of Gods truth. Secondly to speake more specially of this last and worst age of the world: if it be well vnderstood, preaching may be sayd to be the occasion, though not the naturall cause of the extreame wretchednesse thereof: according as Paul sayth, that sinne tooke Rom. 7. 8. 9. 13. occasion by the commaundement, and when the commaundement came, sinne reuiued, and grew out of measure sinfull. Now the preaching & publishing of the truth, may be sayd to be the occasion of much euill in these last times, in two respects: first, because of the fuller discouery of sin: In the dayes of former ignorance many of the same grosse sins were which now are, but either they were smothered in the darknesse of the times, or if they were a litle discried, yet they were reputed nothing so odious. But althings Ephel. 5. 13. when they were reprooued of the light, became manifest; for it is light that maketh all things manifest: so that now sin being seene more, is thought also to be more; for sinne not espied, is in mens iudgements as no sin. So then partly

in this respect it may be said, that since there was so much preaching, the world hath bin worse, because the holy doctrine which is taught, condemneth many things for sin, which the blind world esteemed as no sin, and because the liues of those which are conuerted by preaching, do shew more euidently the monstrous sins of those which are giuen ouer to vngodlinesse. Secondly, the preaching of the word is an occasion of sin, (as also the law of God is) not in it selfe, or in it owne nature; (for it reprobeth sin, and setteth it selfe against all manner of vngodlinesse:) but it is so, partly through the corruption of our nature, partly thorough the iust iudgment of God: the corruption of our nature is alwayes the more furious, the more it is restrained, striving still to do that most which is most forbidden: euery humor desireth that most, whereby it may be most increased. Let a Physitian forbid a melancholike man such and such meates, he shall find himselfe to haue an appetite to no meate so much, as to that which is inhibited. I do verily think the other trees in Paradise afforded fruite as pleasant
to

to the eye, and as good for meate as the forbidden tree: but when as Satan had made a little entry, then even that circumstance that it was forbidden, did set an edge upon the womans desire, and made her more faine to eate of that one, then of any of the rest which were allowed. Paul sayth that the law is the strength of sinne, both because it encreaseth the guilt of sinne, and because sin thereupon becommeth more outrageous: according as Ieremie witnesseth out of his owne experience: I cried out (sayth he) of wrong, and proclaimed desolation, therefore the word of the Lord was made a reproch unto me: it seemeth that upon his preaching the people grew to greater insolencie. Besides, there are many points of necessity to be taught, which though they be deliuered with neuer so great circumspection, yet the leudnesse of mans heart, not being ouer-ruled by the power of Gods spirit, will abuse the same. So we see, the doctrine of Iustification by faith only, breedeth negligence in good works, as appereth by the caueat of the Apostle, What shall we say then? shall we continue still in sin that grace may abound? God forbid.

1. Corint. 15. 56

Ier. 20. 8.

Rom. 6. 1.

Gal. 5. 13.

Phil. 2. 12, 13.

Iude 4.

So the doctrine of our freedom by Christ from the curse of the law, bringeth forth carnal libertie; that made Paul so carefull to vse that restraint, Only vse not your libertie as an occasion to the flesh. In like maner this point, that we are insufficiēt to keep the law, & that we cannot so much as think a good thought, but as God worketh it in vs: Satan works by & by upon a supposed aduantage, & draws (as much as he may) to carelesnes thereupon. And therfore y^e spirit of God in his great wisdom, together with the teaching of that point, that it is God which worketh in vs both the will and the deed, coupleth this exhortation, Make an end of your owne saluation with feare and trembling. The same might be shewed by many other points, which yet notwithstanding is so, not in the nature of the doctrine, but in y^e wretched disposition of mans hart, who abuseth the comfortable doctrine of the Gospel, and turneth the grace of our God into wantonnesse. Againe, as sin through the corruptiō of nature taketh occasiō to multiply it self by the doctrine preached, so it falleth out by the iust indgement of God, y^e the contempt of much preaching bringeth

bringeth forth abundance of iniquitie.

My word (saith God by the Prophet) that I say. Isay. 55. 11.

goeth out of my mouth, shal not returne vnto me void. And therfore in the same place

it is compared to the raine; because as the Verse 10.

raine maketh y^e ground, if not moze fruit-

ful, surely then moze vnprofitable: so the

word of God, either maketh men hearts

softer, and themselues moze fruitfull in

good workes, or else harder, and their

lines moze abominable. And yet is this

no fault in the word, so: that is vnto God 1 Cor. 2. 13.

the sweete sauour of Christ, euen in them

which perish. I haue bene longer in this

point then I thought; but because it is so

much stōd vpon by many, I haue the ra-

ther endeuored to manifest the ful truth

in this behalfe.

Nymph. Truly for mine owne particular,

I must needs confesse, that you haue taught

me more touching this point then I haue

heretofore obserued. Indeed I haue many

times wondred how it shold come to passe,

that there being now (as I thinke) much

more preaching against sin, then hath bin

in the dayes of our forefathers, yet there

should be that abundance of extreme im-

piecie: but now I see the reason of it.

First, ignorance in Gods word, is the supporter of Satans kingdome, and he hauing drowned men in that, gaue way to other things, which being good in their owne nature, and approued of in the eyes of men, yet lost their grace, being done without knowledge. Secondly, mans corrupt nature, spider-like turneth the wholsome doctrine into poison, and stripeth more when it feeleth it selfe limited. Thirdly, it is iust with God, to *giue them up into vile afflictions, and to lay iniquitie vpon their iniquitie*, that they may worke all uncleannesse, *even with greedinesse*, who receiue not the lone of *the truth that they might be saued*. This I thinke is the summe of all which you haue spoken touching this.

Rom. 1. 26.

Psalm. 69. 37.

Ephef. 4. 19.

2. Thessal. 2. 10

Epaph. You haue well obserued it; that is the very substance of my answer to that exception, which I thinke is sufficient to satisfie those whom the truth of God grounded vpon the Scripture may satisfie. I pray you now proceed to the next, if there be any more of this kind.

Nymph. There is onely to my remembrance one more, and that is taken from the tumults & diuisions which accompany your doctrine: they say it many times breedeth

death difference euen among those betwixt whom formerly there was the best agreement.

Epaph. By god neighboꝝ, maruell not at this: foꝛ as I shewed you in the beginning of our conference, that resistance doth alwayes accompany the first publishing of the truth, so also death diuision of hearts follow it: and to this end is that speech of Christ to his Disciples; Thinke not that I am come to send peace Math. 10. 34. into the earth, (that is, such peace as the world dreameth of) I came not to send peace, but the sword. We read that when Paul exercised his ministry at Iconium, there was much ado, and the people of Ac. 14. 4. the citie were diuided, and some were with the Iewes, and some with the Apostles. This made him to be accused befoze the ciuill Magistrate, foꝛ a pestilent fellow, Ac. 14. 5. and a mouer of sedition, according as at this day, factions and humors is a common imputation. Now a diuision cannot chuse but follow preaching: foꝛ when as among the hearers, some mock, Ac. 17. 12. 34. some cleaue vnto the teachers, Ac. 17. 4. 5. some beleeue and others beleeue not, and men fall Ac. 18. 25. to haue great reasoning among theselues,

Acs 17. 10.

Reu. 3. 16.

Acs 18. 17.

Matthew 3. 12

Mathew 25.

Ephes 5. 13.

there cannot but follow a kind of diuissō
 & siding: so that they which in their igno-
 rance accorded together touching religiō,
 are by the working of the word sundzed,
 & some become zealous folowers, others
 malicious oppressors, laboring to stop
 passage of y^e Gospell, & to peruert the strait
 waies of the Lord; & some neuters neither
 cold nor hot, but iust of deputy Gallio his
 religion, who cared nothing for those
 things. The preaching of the word is the
 fan in the hand of Christ by which he par-
 teth his wheat from the chaffe; and where-
 by he maketh way for that great day of
 separation, in which the beleauing sheep
 shal be separated from the rebellious and
 vnbeleauing goates. Againe, let it not be
 forgotten that the word in the right ap-
 plying of it, is called a light which maketh
 all things manifest. When things lie hid
 in the darknes, though they all differ each
 from other in colour, yet they seeme all a-
 like; but the light appoaching, the variety
 of colours is soone descried. So though
 men in the duskithnes of ignorance are
 reputed to be knit together in the vnitie
 of affection, yet when the bright beames
 of Gods word bryake in among them,

che

the thoughts of many hearts be opened, Luke 1.35.
 and then you shall see diuers humors,
 and varietie of dispositions. By these
 things it appeareth, that if it be well vn-
 derstood, diuision and tumult (especially
 at the beginning and first entrie of it a-
 mong an vntaught people) must needs
 follow the soundnes of settled preaching;
 though those that are reclaimed and
 brought to the knowledge of God, are al-
 of one heart and of one soule, proceeding
 by one rule, minding one thing; and ende-
 uouring to keepe the vnitie of the spirit in
 the bond of peace. Act. 4.32.
 Phil 3.16.
 Ephes. 4.3.

Nymph. You haue (thanks be to God) at
 least to my iudgement, well quit your selfe
 against this sort of men. The next that you
 haue to do withall, are more dangerous,
 being such as Paul saith; which do *seeme*
wise in this world, and do both liue after a 1. Corinth. 3.18
 good ciuill fashion, and doe also make
 shew to be not altogether enemies vnto
 religion. They haue also some insight into
 the Scripture, and are wont to reade it, and
 other good bookes priuately: onely this
 their resolution is to keepe a certaine tem-
 per in matters of Religion, to carrie
 themselues in an allowable conformitie.

and not to be ouerforward as many seeme to be, whole zeale they account rash and heady indiscretion.

Epaph. The danger of this kind of people, is most of all in respect of themselves, because this, to be wise in a mans owne eyes, and to feare God, cannot stand together; otherwise for answering any thing that they are able to object, it is a matter of no such great difficulty: For the foolishnesse of God is wiser then men: and as waxe melteth before the fire, so shall their best framed conceits vanish at the very name and presence of the Scripture.

Nymph. I am glad you are so confident: for to tell you true, these things being as they are, very agreeing to mans reason, haue much troubled me, and I haue not vpon the sodaine knowne well what to answer, when in my presence these things haue bene vrged by such as are thought in the world to be men of good discretion. First then it is demaunded why preaching should be the most excellent meanes of spirituall instruction, and wherefore you should take so much vpon you, as that your speaking is able to saue mens soules: you be
but

Proverbs 3. 7.

1. Cor. 1. 25.

Psalm 68. 3.

The allegations
of worldly wise
men against
preaching.

but men as others are, and it is but your pride, who because you would be thought some body, do thus endeavour to extoll the worth and necessitie of your profession.

Epaph. **Here is indeed a perillous argument, it sauezeth altogether of the saluicinesse of an ignorant and unhum-
bled heart. It is come to a proper passe, when as the sonne of man, who dwelleth in a house of clay, whose foundation is in the dust, and which is but a worme, shall dare to talk so presumptuously, and so to set his mouth against heauen, as to aske of God a reason of his doings. Is it not enough that y^e Lord hath made it knowne vnto vs, that his will is by the foolishnes of preaching to saue those which belecue? O Man, who art thou which pleadest against God? And yet behold a reason, though this kind of men generally are wiser in their own conceit then seuen men that can render a reason; and a man may haue more hope of a foole then of them. Loke what reason there was, why the Lord would haue the walles of Jericho beaten downe, onely with the sound of Hammes hoynes, and with a shout: loke also why the Lord would haue no more**

Iob 4. 9.
Iob 25. 6.
Psalme 73. 8, 9.
1. Cor. 1. 21.
Rom. 9. 30.
Prouerbs 26. 12.
Verse 12.
Ier. 6. 10.

circumſtance obſerued, in the cleaning
 2. Kings 5. 13. of leprous Naaman but onely this, Waſh
 and be cleane; the ſame is the reaſon why
 God hath ſanctified the miniſtery of man
 to ſo excellent a worke, as is, the caſting
 2. Corin. 10. 4 downe of the holds of Sathan, and the ga-
 Ephes 4. 12. thering together of his Saints. God bleſed
 no engines of warre, no policies of
 men, in the ouerthrow of the walles of
 Jericho, to the end the people might
 Philae 118 13. haue cauſe to ſay: This was the
 Lords doing. and it is maruellous in
 our eyes. So likewiſe the Prophet
 bleſed ſo little ceremonie about Naaman,
 that he might ſee the finger of God in
 his reconerie. The ſame may be ſaid of
 Preaching; the Lord hath ſanctified
 bearing to be the outward meanes to
 beget faith, and hath imparted to vs the
 2. Corin. 4. 7. treaſure of his word in earthen veſſels,
 to the end that the whole glorie of our
 1. Corin. 1. 11. conuerſion may be his, and that He that
 reioyceth in the renewing of his mind,
 and the reclaiming of his ſoule, may re-
 2. Corin. 4. 7. ioyce in the Lord, and acknowledge
 with humilitie, the excellencie of that po-
 wer, which by ſo meane a meanes could
 bring ſo mightie things to paſſe. It is a
 generall

generall rule, and holdeth in the whole course of our saluation, that Gods power is made perfect (that is, apparant 2 Corinth. 13. 9 and moze conspicuous) through weaknes.

Great is the pride and arrogancie of the heart of man; and if it may find it selfe able, though but by a thought, to further and helpe forward it owne saluation, it prides it selfe forthwith, and to it self secretly it moze magnifieth y^e little, which it imagineth to be in it owne power, then all y^e which it receiueth frō the Lord. For this cause, and for the prevention of this euill, God in his great wisdom, hath so caried the whole Mysterie of godlines, 1. Timoth. 3. 16 from the first foundation of it in heauen, (his Election according to his foreknowledge) vnto the last perfecting of it vntill the day of Iesus Christ, that when a man shall enter into a deepe consideration of it, and withall marke the order and progresse of his owne conversion, he may lay his hand vpon his mouth, and in the truth of his soule may say: Not vnto me O Lord 1. Peter 1. 2. not vnto me, but vnto thy name glorie the Philip. 1. 6. glory. This is the sum: the reason why the Lord hath thought good to commend the hearing of a Preacher and teacher, Proverbs 30. 32 Psalm 115. 1.

Col. 1. 14.

Prouerbs 15. 4.

Romanes 11. 36

1 Cor. 1. 21.

Rom. 1. 21. 22.

1 Cor. 2. 1.

about other courses, for the calling of vs from the power of darknesse into the kingdom of his deare sonne, is, because it maketh most for the setting forth of Gods glorie, which is the thing chiefly respected by him, and for which he made all things, euen to this very end, that all being of him, and through him, and for him, to him might be glorie for euer. If it were left vnto man by his owne wisdom to find out God in the wisdom of God, in the pride of his heart fearing his owne disparagement, he would neuer make choise of preaching, (for we see how the world in the wisdom thereof doth euen scorn it) but he would either drowne himselfe in the puddle of ignorance, as the most do, or else trust to his owne industrie, as many do, vpon whom this curse iustly falleth, that they become vain in their imaginations, and when they professe themselves wise, proue meere fooles, thinking they know much, but yet knowing nothing as they ought to know. If this reason cannot satisfie those, who will needs haue a reason of Gods ordinance, I know not what will satisfie them. Once I am sure, that as many as haue learned

learned the first lesson of Christianitie, to denie themselves, and to vnderstand according to sobrietie, they wil yeld to this truth, and by yelding, no doubt they shal haue comfort. Now whereas we are thought to take too much vpon vs, so often as we endeuor to make knowne the worth and excellencie of our office, it is a meere slander: for I hope we haue learned to preach not our selues, but Christ Iesus, and to account our selues no more then the Ministers by whom ye belecue. We confesse the increase to be of Lords: we leaue the purifying and opening of the heart onely to him. God forbid that we should dare (as it were) to encroch vpon the Lords right, seeing we know that he is a iealous God, and wil not giue his glory to another. This is our opinion of our selues herein, and if any man be so suspicious or so hardly conceited of vs, that he will not otherwise be perswaded, let him remember that Loue thinketh not euill. And yet I must needs adde this also, that so is the Lord pleased to blesse the labors of painful Ministers in his Church, that he boughsafeth them the name of Gods labourers, nay which is more, workers to-

Luke 9.23.
Rom. 12.3

2 Cor. 4.5

1. Cor. 3.5.

Verse 6.
Acts 15.9 16.14

Exodus 20.5
Isay 42.8

1. Corinth. 13.5

1. Cor. 3.9

2. Corinth. 6. 1.

2. Timoth. 4. 16

gether with his grace, and sauers of them which heare them: **The Lord for the gracing and crediting of the instrument, and to preserve it from contempt, attributeth that to it, which is in his owne onely power to effect. Tell me now, whether this answer doth in your opinion silence this grand objection.**

Nymph. A man would thinke, that this which you haue spoken, should stop their mouthes which are otherwise minded: but yet they do replie and say, that you doe much streighten the grace and power of God, and seeme as it were to tye the working of Gods spirit (which yet *bloweth where it listeth*) to your tongues: as though without preaching, there were no saluation: whereby you seeme also to cut them cleane off from any hope of heaven, which either heretofore haue wanted, or now enioy not the common and ordinary vse of preaching.

Epaph. It is no wrong done vnto the grace of God, to limit it to those means, which God in his wisdome hath set a part for the conueyance thereof vnto vs.

**When Paul was in his dangerous sea-
boyage, in the night there stood by him
the**

Acts 27. 23. 24

the Angell of God, saying, Lo, God hath giuen vnto thee all that sayle with thee: yet notwithstanding, when as afterwards, the mariners were about to flie out of the ship, and had let downe the boate into the sea, purposely to make escape, Paul said to the Centurion and the souldiers: Except these abide in the ship, ye cannot be safe. Did Paule herein streighten the almightie power of God, in saying, there could be no safetie without the staying of those mariners in the shippe? Was the Lords hand shortned, that he could not deliuer, but by the skill & industrie of those men? Surely no: but, because Paul knew, y^e God was not pleased otherwise to giue deliuerance: therefore he said that vnlesse the mariners taried, y^e company could not be preserved. The learned do thus distinguish of the power of God: it is an absolute power, by w^{ch} he can do infinite things which he will not do: so Iohn said of him, that he was able of the very stones to raise vp children vnto Abraham. Againe, it is an actuall or a working power, which he executeth in the gouerning of the world and the things therein: now when we speake of the power of God in this sense,

Verse 30. 31.

in com. Nicaen.
Sicut Damas.
1. ad Galicem.

Mathew 3. 9.

Hoc solum non
potest Deus. quod
non vult Aug.
in lib. de Syrak.

*Dei posse velle
est, no posse, nolle.
Tert. adu. Praf.*

it may be truly said, that he cannot do that which he will doe. So touching preaching, we may say without any restraint of Gods power, that except there be preaching men cannot be saved: not that God is tied to the voice of man, that without it he cannot saue; but because the Scripture hath reuealed to vs, that these things are linked together with an indissoluble knot, praying, faith, hearing, preaching, sending. There is no praying without faith, there is no faith but by hearing, there is no hearing to beget faith but of a preacher sent, that is furnished with gifts frō aboue, for the feeding of the flock of Christ depending vpon him with knowledge and vnderstanding. If it shall be urged (as me thought you also touched it) that we shal by this, preiudice them who haue either liued & died without preaching, or those who enioy it not now: I answer, that it is one thing what God can do where the meanes is wanting, another thing what he will doe where the meanes is supplied. When the people of Israel were in the wilderness, and were destitute of the vsual helps of tillage, the Lord gaue them bread from heauen

*1 Pet. 2.
1er. 2. 15.*

John 6. 31.

heaven to eate: but as soon as they came into the promised land the Man ceased. neither had the children of Israel Man any more. Every man was then to fall to his worke, and not to hope by those extraordinary meanes to be relieved. To streng- then the faith of Hezekiah, the Lord said to him, Thou shalt eate this yeare such as Isa. 37. 36 groweth of it selfe, and the second yeare such things as grow without sowing; but in the third yeare, sow ye, and reape, and plant &c. He that (those two yeeres being expired) had trusted to the former courses, neglecting husbandry, out of all doubt he might have bene starved: and yet before, he that had called Gods power, to furnish them with fode without sowing into question, had bene worthy to be punished. In the beginning of the worlds creation, God for the manifesting of his Gen. 1. 3. 4. 5. owne power and glory, made light to be, & the earth to bud forth: before the Sun (which to vs is the fountaine of light, and the cherisher of the vital heat which is in all things) was created: yet now God having established an orderly course, we cannot hope either for light in the ayre, or for life among the crea-

tures vpon the earth without the Sun.
 I do apply al these things thus: the want
 of the meanes of publicke preaching in
 former ages, could not be any hindrance
 vnto God in sauing those which he knew
 before, and who were ordained vnto eter-
 nall life. And I am out of doubt of it, that
 in the dayes of Popery in this land, whē
 the key of knowledge was viterly taken a-
 way; and the law penſſed from the priest,
 counſell from the wiſe, and the word from
 the Prophet; so that if a man did wander
 from sea to sea, and did run to and fro from
 the North euen vnto the East to seeke the
 word of the Lord, yet he could not find it.
 I say, I am clere in it, that many then in
 that great darknes, did as y^e p^rouerbe is)
 ſe day at a very little hole, & very ſtragely
 came to the knowledge of the truth, ſome
 by the ſight of ſome parcels of ſcripture,
 ſome by y^e writings of good men, ſome by
 conference with others, though the ſame
 were both very ſeldome & very ſecret. ſome
 by knowing little moze then the Lords
 prayer in Engliſh, & yet had they y^e aſſu-
 rance of the truth of it, & felt that cōſort, &
 receiued y^e ſweetneſſe by it, that (as the hi-
 ſtozies of the church make mention) they
 were

James 1. 19.
 Ad. 13. 48.

Luke 11. 52.
 Ieremie 18. 18.

Amos 3. 12.

were contented to sacrifice their liues, & to
spend their best blood to beare witness vnto
it: which y^e Lord did, both that it might
appeare to all ensuing ages, y^e he returned
a small remnant, euen as the shepherde tra-
keth out of the mouth of the lion two legs,
or a peece of an eare: then when as the
daughter of Sion was become as Sodome,
and not much vnlike vnto Gomorrah
withal y^e at the day of Christs appearing,
when he shal consume that man of sin with
the breath of his mouth, and abolish him
with the brightnes of his coming, he may
haue witnesses against him out of all a-
ges, both of y^e deccablenesse of his super-
stitious doctrines, & of the cruelty of his
tyrannous and bloody proceedings. That
which I say touching the times of the E-
gyptian darknes of Idolery, may be said
also of many parts of the Realme, which
notwithstanding the long flourishing of
the Gospell in this land, yet I know not
through whose default neuer enioyed
the benefit & comfort of settled preaching:
for though for the most part it be true,
that where the Lord bath much people,
there he is not waiting to send some, who
may continue with them, and teach the

A 75. 18. 19.
V. 10. 11.

Ezech. 2. 4. 5.

of God among them: yet as he sometimes boughsafeth a Preacher to impudent and stiff-necked children, who will not heare, to to that end, that in the day of vengeance they may know there hath bene a Prophet among them: so also it pleaseth him by secret and hidden, yea and very unlikely courses, to affoord vnto some hearts the blessing of inward conuersion, vppon whom he hath net bestowed the benefite of outward instruction by a Preacher. But what then? Yet this remaineth certain, that as when the good meanes is wanting, and cannot by any meanes be procured, the power and mercie of God must not be distrusted: so when the meanes is bestowed, his bountie cannot without great sin be despised. It is herein, as it is in the case of Sacraments: it is not simply the want of them (when a man cannot, though faine he would, become partaker of them) but the contempt which is damnable. As for example, if a father vnnecessarily deferre the baptisme of his child longer then the time appoynted by the order of the Church, it is a sin in him, if the child die without baptisme: so likewise for a man usually

usually to turne is backe from the adm-
 nistration of the Lords Supper, making
 no reckoning of the cōfort offered therein,
 it is doubtlesse a fault, which God will
 not let to go away unpunished. The
 same may be said of the word preached,
 if a man be deprivied of it through a kind
 of unauoydable necessitie, simply there is
 no prejudice to a mans saluation there-
 by, if so be these things be ioyned with it:
 first, that in this straits, the soule do pant Psalm 43 1.
 after that great benefit of which it is de-
 privied: secondly, that a man do both de-
 sire & require that one thing of the Lord,
 euen to behold the beautie of the Lord, Psalm 27 4.
 namely the light of the glorious Gospel of 2 Corin 4 4.
 Christ, which is the image of God: thirdly
 that he be careful to vse all such helps of
 reading the scripture, and of other godly
 treatises, and of conference with men of
 knowledge, as may possibly be procured.
 But if so be a man may by any meanes
 enioy the benefite and comfort of preach-
 ing, though it be with some both charge
 and trauell, if then he carelesly neglect it,
 and trust to other meanes, no doubt the
 Lord will curse those meanes vnto him.
 Which so; all that in their owne nature

are good, and might profite, if they were not vled with contempt of the principal. This is my iudgment touching this supposall, that by pressing the worth of preaching, we do confine as it were Gods grace, and tie it to our tongues, & do cut them short of all hope of saluation, which by any occasion haue liued or do liue without it.

Ans. Well sir, this kind of men for all this is not satisfied, but being beaten by argument and scripture from one fond conceit, they forthwith run to another, and seek not so much how to make a direct reply, as to heape vp diversity of objections. And therefore when they haue said all they can, for the pressing of those particulars, the vanity whereof you haue layed open to the full; then (hoping to obtaine that with multitude of words, which with waight of reason they cannot,) they wil needs know a reason why there may not be as much good gotten by their owne priuate reading in the bookes of the scripture, and in other good sermons and treatises which are set forth, as by hearing a Preacher in the Church.

Epiph. Touching priuate reading of
the

the scripture, I am so far from disliking it any way, that with that learned Chrysostome I do alwayes exhort, and will not faile in stirring vp the people, that they should not onely diligently attend to matters spoken publikely, but endeavour themselves also to reade and peruse y^e scriptures priuately. God forbid, I or any other of my profession, should maintaine that Popish Doctrine, that the common vse of the Scripture is the cause of all heresies, and not rather the contrary taught by Christ, and seconded by the learned in Gods Church, namely, that the cause of all euill, whether it be error in iudgement, or corruption in manners, is the ignorance of the Scripture. We might well reioyce in the happynesse of our times, if we might be occasioned by our peoples experience in the booke of God, to say as one said of o.d: You may (saith he) see commonly our opinions and rules of religion to be held and maintained not onely by the masters of the Church and teachers of the people, but euen by Smithes, and Shoemakers, and husbandmen, and hedgers, and heard-men,

*Chrys. Homil. 3.
de Lazaro.*

*Aphons de Co-
rinth 3 c. 6. de
sup. i. i. i. h. a. r. e. t.*

*Mathew 22. 29.
Chrys. Homil. 9.
in epist. ad Colos.*

*Theodoret lib. 3.
de corr. end.
Gra. Philib.*

Hofius de facto
verum non le-
gendo.

Rom. 12. 14
Eph. 4. 12.

Act. 9. 6.

yea and by women and seamstresses : the
comfort which we should take herein,
should make vs little to esteem the scoffes
of Iudaicall Papists, who obiect it to
vs as a matter of disgrace, that we haue
pꝛophaned the Scripture by making it
common to artificers and women. Now
that which I say of the pꝛivate reading
of the scripture, I say also of the perusing
of godly treatises, & sermons, & the like.
I wish mens care in this kind encreased,
and I know that thereby there cometh
much comfort vnto Gods people. But
yet I dare not to ascribe that to pꝛivate
exercises, which by the doctrine of the
Scripture belongeth to the publike mi-
nisterie, namely the begetting of faith,
and the gathering together of the Saints
of God into his Church. I find in the ho-
ly historie, the teaching by the ministerie
of man to be pꝛeferred befoze those
things to which I suppose no man will
dare to equal his owne pꝛivate industry.
When Christ called Paul from heauen,
and Paul demanded, Lord what wilt thou
that I do? a man in reason would haue
thought that there could haue bene no
moze excellent means foꝛ Pauls instructiō,
then.

then if Christ should haue discoursed to him with his owne mouth; yet to maintaine the credit of Gods ordinance, and to make knowne the blessing that followeth it, Paul is commanded to depend vpon the ministry and direction of Ananias. Not much unlike is that example of Cornelius: it pleased God to send an Angell vnto him, to testifie vnto him the remembrance of his almes and prayers with the Lord: why then did not the same Angell proceed to instruct him in the mystery of Christ? what credite would the words of so glorious a creature haue carried: saith flesh & blood: and yet the Lord in his wisdom thought it most fitting course to put ouer Cornelius to the ministry of Peter, (Send me to Ioppa & call for Verse 5. 6. Simon; he shall tel thee what thou oughtest to do:) to the end that it might appeare, that it pleaseth him to vse mans voice as his instrument, and to tie our faith vnto it. Shall any man dare to put his owne private courses of reading into the balance with publike preaching, when as it hath seemed good to the wisdom of God to preferre it (in regard of mans vse) before the immediate teaching of

Act. 10.

Verse 5. 6.

Caluin vpon
that place.

7

Christ, or the instruction of an Angell?
 Christ a litle before his death, among o-
 ther things whereby he endeavored to
 comfort the hearts of his disciples, delive-
 red to them this promise, Verily, verily, I
 say vnto you, he that beleueth in me, the
 workes that I do he shal do also, and grea-
 ter then these shal he do. It was a promise
 made vnto the whole Church, neither
 peculiar to the Apostles, nor common to
 euery Christian. If any man demaund
 what be these greater workes, which
 shall be done by men, which Christ did
 not: I confesse with the learned, that
 it was in part verified in the myracles
 of the Apostles; as namely in that of
 Peter, who cured the diseased with his
 shadow, which may be thought greater
 then that of Christ, who healed with
 the touch of his garment: yet thereby
 was chiefly meant the conuersion of
 the world, by the preaching of the Gos-
 spell, to which it pleased our Sauioꝝ to
 depute his Apostles and their successors:
 a worke indeed far greater then any of
 those myracles which he wrought here
 vpon earth by his owne immediate po-
 wer. His worke it is, I confesse, the con-
 uersion

John 14. 12

Caluin vpon
this place.

Augu. Tract. 100
Ioh. 71
Chrys. Hom. 12.
in Acta. Apost.

Act. 5. 15.

Mathew 14. 36

August. Tract. 100
Ioh. 72.
Crisost. Hom. 6.
in Ioh.
Cyril. lib. 2. c. 42.

nerison of sinners, (for neither is he that planteth any thing, neither he that watereth) yet he thought it most agreeing to mans infirmities and weaknesse, and the best meanes both for the furtherance of his owne glory, and the triall of our obedience, to put men in the service of his Church, that they might pray the people in Christs stead to be reconciled vnto God. 1. Corinth. 3. 7

Who then can without great presumption, & no lesse contempt of Gods maiesty, rely vpon any other meanes for his spirituall edification, when as the Lord hath thought it meet to put his words in the mouth of a man and to be with it, the

Jeremie 1. 9

Exodus 4. 12

to speake from heaven by an immediate voice, or to employ those ministering spirits in that service, which notwithstanding are sent forth for their tasks which shall be heires of saluation? Great is the benefite of priuate reading, especially of the booke of holy scripture: but yet as giuing attendance to reading in a Minister, 1. Timothy 4. 13

is to make him the better able to discharge his publike dutie, in exhortation and doctrine: so the chiefe end of priuate searching the scripture by priuate meane, is in respect of the publike ministry,

Hebrewes 1. 14

*Chrys. Homil. 3.
de Lectoro.*

that befoze hand they may be prepared to it, & afterwards may the better know how to profit by it: for the former of these two (namely preparation by reading to the publike hearing; it is a fit saying of Chrysostome: We do (sayth he) oftentimes tell you befoze hand, the text whercof our purpose is to entreate, that in the meane while you (taking your booke, and weighing the summe and state of the place) may make your minds fitter to receiue those points which shal after be deliuered. As indeed the ignorance of the people in the language of the scripture, and the generall course & story of the Bible maketh preaching to be much lesse profitable vnto them. Now for the latter, to wit, y^e vse of priuat reading for profite after hearing, we haue that memorable example of those worthy gentlemen of Berea, who hearing the Apostles preach, and receiuing the word with all readinesse, searched the scriptures dayly whether those things were so.

Acts 17. 11.

Nymphs. Why, but (may it be said) is not the scripture the ground and foundation of all your doctrine; and are you able to say more or to speake better then many
both

both auncient and later learned men,
whose excellent sermons are put in print,
and whose godly treatises are extant for
the benefite and comfort of Gods peo-
ple?

Epaph. If we preach unto you any o-
ther doctrine then that which the scrip-
ture will allow, we are woorthy of Pauls
curse; we know and confesse the Bible
to be the most exact rule, and square, and
canon, by which all our sermons must be
tried: we acknowledge also that holy me-
n which haue wytten touching matters
of religion, and haue published their wel
labored, & zealously deliuered sermons,
haue many of them set downe the truth
of God soundly, and bene the meanes of
much comfort to well affected people: but
yet, though the doctrine be the same in
substance, that is read primate, & which
is publikely deliuered, yet the like fruite
cannot follow vpon both. If you de-
maund a reason, I can giue no better
then that which Christ gaue of Gods re-
uealing those things to babes, which he
hid from the wise and prudent, Euen so
it is, because the Lord his good pleasure is
such. When the people of Israel were in

Gal. 1. 8.
Αὐτίς ὁ θεὸς
καὶ ὁ κύριος
ἡμεῶν Ἰησοῦς
Χρυσόστομ.
Homil. 13. in 2.
Corinth.

Math. 11. 25.

Exodus 16. 20.

Verse 24.

Proverbs 8. 33.

their iourney to Canaan, and were fed
 with bread from heaven: we read that if
 upon the week dayes any man had refer-
 ued of the Manna till the morning, it was
 full of wormes and flanke; but being kept
 the day befoze the Sabbath untill mor-
 ning, it flanke not, neither was there any
 worne therein. I would faine see who
 could giue me any other reason, why the
 Manna should at the one time corrupt,
 at the other continue sweete, but onely
 this: God shewed his power in preserv-
 ing it at y^e one time, because it was his
 own ordinance for the better sanctifying
 the Sabbath; and he shewed his iustice
 in rotting it at the other time, because he
 had forbidden it, to teach them to depend
 vpon his providence. After the same sort,
 one man he taking himselfe to be a wise
 man, & thinking himselfe to be as able to
 draw good matter out of the books of the
 scripture, and other writings, as the best
 Preacher of them all, either contemneth
 or else neglecteth the publike Ministry.
 Another, he is obediencie to Gods com-
 maundement, VVatcheth dayly at the
 gates of the Lords house, and giueth at-
 tendance at the postes of his doeres, fra-
 ming

ming all his priuate readings and meditations to the fitting of himselfe for the assembly exercises. You will aske me, why should the knowledge of the former rot (as it were) and putrifie, and become nothing worth, he being a man of good capacitie and vnderstanding, & reading none but sound authoꝝ: and the other thriue in knowledge and in the power of goodlines, that yet for all that learneth no other doctrine then he findeth in his good bookes at home? I might happily, but verily for mine owne part I will sake no other answer but this: God hath promised to blesse the latter course, saying, If thou cause thine eares to hearken vnto wisdom, and incline thine heart to vnderstanding; then thou shalt vnderstand the feare of the Lord, and find the knowledge of God. But for the other, because it is a course of mans owne deuising, saouring of inward pride, therefore the Lord turneth it (as he doeth all humane wisdom) into foolishnes: so y^e the knowl-
ledge so gotten (I meane by another way, & not by that old trode path of hearing) either becometh as y^e Apostle speaketh, vaine iangling, or els if it be sound,

Proverbs 2.2.5

1. Corinth. 1. 20

1. Timothy 1. 6

in regard of the apprehension of truth,
yet it swimmeth onely in the bzaine, and
neuer worketh to the renewing and sea-
soning of the heart.

Nymph. There is yet one thing more
touching this conceit which men haue, to
gaue more by their owne priuate courses
then by the publike ministry, and that is
5 this: men that write, write with great deli-
beration and aduice; as for you when you
preach, you speake many times at aduen-
ture, and nothing so iudicially as do those
who commit things to writing. Besides
that, many of you are but nouices and *young*
schollers, whom S. Paul seemeth not so well
to approue of. And for these causes, as they
must needs be iealous of your iudgement
in many things, so neither can they receiue
that profit by your preaching, as they may
by priuate reading.

1. Timothy 3. 6

Epaph. Alas, a poore excuse: it is true,
if men write as they ought, they write
with iudgement and hardfulesse: and so
do they also preach with good aduice,
who haue learned to feare him, that
hath said, Cursed be he which doeth the
worke of the Lord negligently. I will not
go about to patronise the negligence
and

Jer. 48. 10.

and carelesnesse of any man: I wish we
would all studie to shew our selues ap-
proued vnto God, workemen that neede 1. Timothy 2. 15
not be ashamed, diuiding the word of
God aright: that so when the fire shall 1. Corin. 3. 13, 14
trie every mans worke of what sort it is,
ours may abide. Yet this I will say,
that if you compare like with like, that
is, sound writers with sound preachers,
you shall find the sermons of the one fra-
med with as good iudgement, as the
bookes and writings of the other. And
if that be a commendation (as I see no
reason but it should) for a mans labors
to smell of the candle, no doubt you Olare Lucernam
shall perceiue euen the ordinarie exerci-
ses of painefull and conscionable Prea-
chers to saueur of as much art and in-
dustrie, as the treatises of your most
iudicious and grauest writers. Ne-
uerthelesse, because as the Scripture
sayth, In many things we slippe all, both Iames 3. 2
Preachers and writers, both readers
of bookes and hearers of sermons, there-
fore there is a necessitie of care and
iudgement in those that seeke to reape
benefite by other mens labours, that
like bees they may sucke out the best and

sweetest, and most wholesome doctrine
 from them both. Now for the youth of
 many Ministers, which men (as you
 say) pleade, and saie also to ground
 their conceit vpon the scripture: I an-
 swer: first, that it is greatly to be lamen-
 ted to see the ouersowwardnesse of many
 young men, who not considering the
 weight of that holy calling, do sobainly
 thrust themselves into it, and vnder-
 take (as the saying is) to teach others,
 befoze they themselves are well instru-
 cted; so that I do verily thinke, there are
 not at this day moze nouices and pu-
 nies of any profession, then there are of
 the ministerie. And soz the preuenting
 of this euill, were those decrees of the
 auncient Councils, which set downe a
 certaine age, befoze which a man was
 not to be admitted to the office of a Mi-
 nister or Bishop in the Church. Se-
 condly, I adde this withall, that the gra-
 ces of God are not to be limited to any
 age. It was a good distinction of the
 Heathen man, betwixt a yong man in
 yeares, and a yong man in conditions:
 It is not meete that yong men should
 say with Elihu, The dayes shall speake,
 and

*Primo ad docen-
 dum, quam ad
 descendum.*

*Con. Carth. 3. c. 4.
 Conc. Agat. c. 16
 Con. Toles. 4. c. 17*

Arist. Eth. lib. 1.

Iob 32. 7.

and the multitude of yeares shall teach
wisdom. And yet it must be remem-
bered which is also there noted, that it is
the inspiration of the Almighty which Verse 29.
giveth vnderstanding, and that the aged
doe not alway vnderstand iudgement.

Young Dauid by the studie of Gods
word, may come to vnderstand more Psalm. 119 100
then the auncient. Paul biddeth Timothy
that no man should despise his youth. 1.Tim.4 12.

If we shall distinguish the age of man,
according as some Philosophers did, *Laert. lib. 3. in
vita Pythag.*

then Timothy could not be aboue five
and twentie when Paul so wrote vnto
him. Touching the place it selfe (that
a Bishop must not be a young scholler) *Chres. obser-
ueth that Paul
saith not nor
but young*
it must not be vnderstood of a yong man
in yeares, but of one lately conuerted
to the Christian faith, and newly plan-
ted in the Church. Timothy liued in
Asia, and therefore was necessarily to
furnish the Church out of Gentilisme:
for this cause Paul aduiseeth him to make
choise of such as were settled in the do-
ctrine of Christianitie, and not to ad-
uaunce men to the dignitie of a Bi-
shop by and by after their conuersion.
So that, howsoever I confesse that ma-

turitie of yeares is yet to be respected in a Minister, because in the ordinary course it is accompanied with ripenesse of iudgement, yet neither doeth that place of the Apostle prescribe a law for the debarring of young men from the ministry, neither doeth any place of scripture disable that age, or make it incapable of the ministry, so that it be graced with gifts sufficient for so excellent a function. And this I thinke may be answer full enough to this objection.

Nymp. What exception these wise men will make against this your answer, I know not; you haue resolved me to the full: and concerning yong Ministers, I heard once an acquaintance of mine, who was brought vp in the Vniuersitie, say, that he knew many schollers in his time, that when they were yong and fresh, were of very great hope, and were also very zealous, and had a good gift in preaching, who notwithstanding in time grew cold, and lesse able for gifts, both of iudgement and zeale, and vterance to do good in Gods Church: but these points I will not mell with, onely your discourse brought that into my mind
which

which I heard a friend of mine say a good while since. I must craue your iudgement yet a litle further, touching these men; besides al these pretended reasons, they stand much vpon two things, which flesh and bloud doth well approue of: one is, that few of the great men of the world doe esteeme preaching; the other is, that it is not wisdom for a man in matters of religion to be too forward. What say you to this?

6

Epaph. I say, it is a hard matter for those men to come to amendment out of the snare of the diuell, which are taken of him at his will: and we had neede to beg of that God, who commaunded the light to shine out of darknesse, that he would shine in our hearts, to giue the light of his knowledge: for if a man be once entangled in error, Satan hath so many deuises to hold him in, that it is a hard matter for him to get from him: yet if men haue any grace, or wil yeld to any reaso, they may soone see the vanitie of these perswasions, as I wil briefly declare vnto you. In the former there are two things to be noted: first, that if the practise of men were a sufficient rule in matters of Religion,

2. Timothy 2. 26

2. Corin. 4. 6.

Jeremy 15 16.

Rom. 1. 16.

Iohn 7. 48.

*Major pars vin-
cit meliorem.*

Exod. 31.

there are (thanks be to God) many ho-
 nozable personages, many nobles, ma-
 ny gentlemen, many of god note for
 woꝛldly respects, who do vnfaignedly re-
 uerence and heartily embrace the prea-
 ching of Gods woꝛd, and no doubt it is
 vnto them the ioy and reioycing of their
 hearts, and they esteeme of it to be euen
 as it is, The power of God vnto saluation:
 so that if the approbation of men were
 a reason of foꝛce, it is not wanting vnto
 preaching: but as God hath a people
 out of all, so that also hath friends and
 fauourers among all. Secondly, sup-
 pose that this course of preaching were
 vtterly despised, and all the great wise
 men of the woꝛld did euen scoꝛne it,
 and tread it vnder their feete, yet
 this were a poore argument, vnlesse
 we will say, it was a good reason which
 they vsed against Christ, Doeth any
 of the rulers or of the Pharisees beleue
 in him? The best things haue not com-
 monly the most voices, and many times
 according to the pꝛouerbe, the greater
 part is too hard for the better part.
 There was a voyce put vp for making
 a golden calfe, and there was not one
 against

against it. There was a voyce, what should be done with Iesus, and all cryed, Crucifie him. Another was, whether God should be God, or Baal should be God: and none held with God but Eliah. S. Augustine saith, that the church was sometimes in one Abel, and in one Enoch: God forbid we should be in the number of those, who define the church by the multitude; we are content to leaue that absurditie to the Papists: we know that Christs flocke is a little flocke; and we must endeuor to grow to that resolution, to say, Lord, though that all men should be offended by thee, yet will I neuer be offended. Now for that other perswasion, that it is not good to be too eager in matters of religion, I know it to be the common perswasion of a great many: but yet this is a sure rule, that that man who thinketh himselfe to haue knowledge, and zeale, and religion enough, the same hath no knowledge, no zeale, no religion at all. For where soeuer the graces of God are in truth, there is (in regard of the sweetnesse which a man findeth in them) a forgetting that which is behind, and an

Mathew 27

1. King. 18

Aug in Psal. 123
ὁ ἐκκλησία τοῦ
ἐκκλησιαστικῆς ἐπι-
στομης. Νεμεσις.

Luke 12. 32.

Mathew 26. 33

Phil. 3. 13.

endeuouring a mans selfe to that which
 as before, grieuing moze for that which
 is yet wanting, then reioycing in
 that which already is attained. In the
 parable of the Talents, it is said, that
 from him that hath not, euen that he hath
 shall be taken away: but in another of the
 Gospels it is said, From him shall be ta-
 ken euen that which it seemeth that he
 hath. So that it is but a conceit and
 opinion of grace, where there is no
 desire to increase in grace. It is a good
 saying, when a man is come to that passe
 that he hath no desire to be better, then
 he quite leaueth off to be good. And ther-
 fore men do but deceiue themselves, in
 neglecting the benefit of preaching, vpon
 a conceit, that it is best to keepe a temper
 in matters of religion, and to content
 themselves with a certaine portion of
 knowledge, and with a set measure
 of zeale, and neuer to proceede further;
 for we must desire the sincere milke of the
 word, that we may grow thereby. And in-
 deed if so be that we haue tasted how
 bountifull the Lord is, we shall neuer be
 able to satisfie our selues, either in the
 labozing after knowledge in religion,

*Non quid egeris,
 sed quid superflue
 curandum: si di-
 xisti sufficere, de-
 fecisti.*

Mathew 25. 29

Luke 8. 18.

*Ubi incipit nolle
 fieri melior, ibi
 desinit esse bonus.*

1. Peter 3. 2.

Verse 3.

or in the zealous profession and practise of religion.

Nymph. Now that you speake of being too forward and precise in matters of religion, it putteth me in mind of a saying of *Salomons*, which I well vnderstand not, *Be not thou* (saith he) *iust ouermuch*. It may seeme to agree with their opinion, which would not haue men to be too strait, as they call it.

Ecclesiast. 7. 13

Epaph. It is a good rule of the learned, that for the finding out the true meaning of a place of scripture, we must consider what goeth before, and what followeth: this rule obserued will some cleare this place. In the verse going before, *Salomon* had spoken of the confusion (as may some) which is in the worlde: There is (saith he) a iust man that perisheth in his iustice, and there is a wicked man that continueth long in his malice. Now to repress the rash headinesse of mans disposition, which is ready to censure Gods courses at pleasure, the wise man addeth this, Be not thou iust ouermuch; that is, Beware thou take not vpon thee, vnder pretence of iustice, to charge these courses of Gods prouidence with iniustice.

Augustine.

Verse 17.

Psalm 73.

Jeremy 12.1.

Ephes. 5. 15. &
29. 1 Cor. accurat
Gal. 6. 16.

1. Thessal. 5. 22

1st 3. 6.
Deut. 29. 19.

It was an error we know, that David by his owne confession had welneare fallen into. And Jeremy the Prophet, craued leaue of God that he might talke with him of his iudgement: he could hardly at the first satisfie himselfe in it, how God could be iust, and yet suffer them to be in wealth that rebelliously transgresse. This taryng of Gods proceedings in the gouerning of the world, is (I take it) chiefly forbidden in this precept, Be not iust ouermuch: and this to my seeming is the meaning of that place: howsoeuer it be taken (as I know some otherwise interprete it) yet I am sure it condemneth not that warie and zealous course in the practise of Religion, which though the world is pleased to call ouerholinesse, yet I am well aduised the scripture vudgeth, bidding vs to walke circumspectly or exactly, and by a rule, and to abstaine from all appearance of euill.

Nymph. The Lord in his mercie enable vs so to do: for surely the wicked and vngodly, as they are bold in euill, so that the very triallof their countenance testifieth against them, so also they do adde drunkenesse

nesse to thirst, labouring to grow to a kind of perfection in vngodlinesse. And therefore great shame shall it be for vs, who *professe to know God*, to waxe cold and faint Tit. 1. 16. hearted, and timorous in the duties of pietie, and not to strue rather *to go from* Psalm 34. 7. *strength to strength*, and to increafe in holines, as fast as prophane godlesse men thriue in iniquitie.

I haue hitherto (as farre as my experience in obseruing, and my memorie in recounting hath enabled me) propounded vnto you the seuerall obiections against preaching, vrged ordinarily by three sorts of men; the grossely ignorant, the wretchedly prophane, and the worldly wise; and you haue (I thanke you) opened vnto me the blindnesse of the first, the vilenesse of the second, and the vanitie of the last. The contentment that I haue receiued by your discourse hitherto, maketh me to presume further vpon you, and to request your patience in hearing, and your skill in resoluing some exceptions made by a fourth sort of men: last in order, but not least in argument, because they are by education learned, and by profession (some of them) Mini-

steers and Preachers, and yet do not altogether fauour those courses of preaching, which some do magnifie so exceedingly.

Non audeo scribere contra Episcopum communium meorum.

Hieronymus ad Augustin. plura omnibus & a mandata & precepta vendit et versat.
Dionys. Alexan.

Iob 31 22.

Epaph. Neighbour (to say nothing of my dutie) I am bound by my promise to endeavour to satisfie you: and howsoever I am of Hieroms mind, & am vnwilling to oppose my self against any learned men of mine owne profession, least I should seeme desirous of contention: yet because the truth is to be preferred before all other respects, and to giue titles is a thing so dangerous, therefore I will forget all things which might hinder me in free speaking that which in my conscience I am verily perswaded is the truth, and wil set before me only the glory of God, and the common good and benefite of his Church.

The exceptions of some seeming learned.

Nymph. Being then assured of your readinesse, I will tell you what I haue marked partly out of the speeches, partly out of the sermons of some that are reputed learned men: I am no scholler, and therefore you must not expect any precise order at my hands; yet to my seeming their exceptions are either against preaching it selfe,

or

or against the maner of it , as by some it is performed.

Epaph. Your methode is good enough: But do you know any professing the ministry, which do utterly mislike and disallow preaching?

Nymph. I do not say so: for they who are the most eager in this matter, if you fall to reasoning with them, cannot for shame but say, that preaching is the most ordinary and vsuall meanes which God vseth to worke by in the hearts of the hearers: and againe, that preaching doeth profite more then reading. And yet for al that, in their ordinarie discourse they make knowne their opinion thus, that the word of God is as effectuall when it is read, as when it is preached, and that reading is preaching.

Epaph. Certainly I cannot but maruell, that men of learning and professed Divines, should undertake the maintenance of such an opinion, yea though it were but for their credits sake: for put this case, that in y^e vacancie of an Ecclesiasticall preferment, there were ioynt suters for it, a man of note & quality, that hath spent many yeres in study,

and runne through the whole circle of sciences, and is graced also with degrees of scholes, the testimonie of his desert: and another, an ordinary fellow, that hath had but reasonable breeding, and no seasoning but in a countrey schole, and therefore is able to do little perhaps saue onely reade faire, and go by his Rubricke: thinke you that your Uniuersitie scholler would not think himself greatly wronged, and grow into a marvellous discontentment if that other should be preferred before him? yes doubtlesse: he would renew that old complaint of Salomons, and say, Folly is set in great excellencie, I haue seene seruants on horses, and Princes walking as seruants on the ground. He would say, it were enough for such a one as he, if he were appointed to some lower office in y^e church, where he might eate a moriel of bread: and that if he were so well prouided for, as was Michah his Leuite, with ten shekels of siluer by the yeare, and a sute of apparell, and his meate and drinke, surely then he were as well preferred as he deserueth. Like to these, would be the priuy thoughts of a wel desering scholler, being disappointed of his

Eccles. 10. 6. 7.

1 Sam. 9. 36.

Judg. 17. 10.

his hoped preferment, by so vnworthy a competitor. And for mine owne part, I thinke him to haue very iust cause so to complaine. But yet this being held for a truth, that reading is as effectually as preaching, and that an ordinary man may doe as much good, saue as many soules, & draw as great a multitude to heauen with his distinct reading, as the other with al his vniuersitie learning and long labored for Diuinitie, surely then the scholler hath no reason to thinke himself wronged in missing his preferment: for why should there be a disparitie in reward, where there is no great precedence in respect of the possibilitie to do good in Gods Church? So that I say, me thinks if it were for no other cause, yet men of learning and Preachers by profession, should neuer go about to equal bare and naked reading vnto preaching.

Nymph. This may perhappes be some reason in policie; but I hope you haue some better prooffe then this for the matter: otherwise I know what the world will say, (euen that which it spareth not to speake alreadye) that you Preachers are so earnest in the extolling of preaching, onely for

your owne priuate credites sake, that you may be the better esteemed.

Epaph. God be thanked, variety of sufficient p^{ro}ofes is not wanting in this cause; but yet this I thought good to obserue, as it were by the way, to the end that men (who it may be haue a good opinion of their owne well deseruing) may see what an inconuenience is like to follow by the defence of such an opinion.

Nymph. I am very desirous to heare what may be said in this case touching the comparison that is made betwixt reading and preaching, and therefore I do euen long til you come vnto it.

Epaph. Well then (to cut off all p^{re}ambles and vnnecessary circumstances) for this point touching the efficacy of preaching aboue reading, I will stand vpon two reasons chiefly: the one is experience, the other is Gods ordinance, who hath appointed & abilitie to preach, as a matter of necessity in euery one that is called to the ministry.

Experience is sometimes called the mistresse of scholes, but by it in this point wise men may learne a good lesson: first of all, if there be a view taken of all the places

places & parishes where there hath bene
onely reading, and of those which haue
bene furnished with a settled preaching
Minister, whose care hath bene to diuide 2.Tim.2.15
the word of truth aright: the different e-
state of the places wil soon make known
the worth of preaching aboue reading:
for looke into those who haue cuer rested
themselves satisfied with a reading Mi-
nister, neither seeking nor caring for bet-
ter meanes of instruction, and you shall
find generally wofull ignorance, lamen-
table blindness in the matters of God,
men altogether childre in vnderstanding, 1.Cor.14.20.
popish, superstitious, heathenish, in one
word, to speake with the Apostle, Wal- Ephes.4.17.18
king in the vanitie of their mind, hauing
their cogitation darkned, and being stran-
gers from the life of God through the ig-
norance that is in them, because of the
hardnes of their hearts. This is the gene-
rall condition of such places. But looke
againe to those, who haue bene taught in Gal.6.6
the word, & haue made conscience to pro-
fit by the good meanes wherewith God
hath blessed them, there shall you see the
scale of the ministration, euen the conuer- 1.Cor.9.2
sion of soules, comfortable knowledge &

Ephes. 6. 4.
Psalm 2.

2. Tim. 2. 3.
Iohn 16. 23.
Iohn 15. 19.
Mat. 5. 41.

conscionable carriage, the Lords Saboth sanctified, his word accounted precious, the sacraments reuerently vsed, priuate families trained vp in instruction and information of the Lord, & euen a very church in euery house. I know indeede that there are many good people dwelling in parishes wanting preaching, and many ignorant and vngodly ones in places well furnished with teaching, but yet let these circumstances noted by me be remembred, of resting wel enough satisfied with bare reading, and of reioycing in the benefite of an able preacher, & then it wil be found true which I haue said, and be a sufficient testimony of the power of preaching aboue reading. Secondly, whereas the scripture is a witnes of the bad opinion which the world will haue of y^e ministry of the word, assuring them that are called to that office, that the faithfull discharge of their duty shal be rewarded with affliction, with hatred, with all manner of euill sayings; let any man examine his owne obseruation, and see in which of the two, the Reader or the Preacher, this is best verified. It is an old saying, that by the market folkes you shall vnderstand how the

the market goeth. Take me therefore a common man whom you meet by chance & question with him touching the place where he dwelleth, & about his minister; if he be but a Reader, you shall haue him say straitly, Truly we haue a good honest quiet man, many indeed he cannot preach, but he liueth peaceably, & medleth with no mā, & is very wel beloued amongst vs; for why, he is a fellowlike man, &c: but put case y^e minister be a painful preacher, one that seeketh to draw the people from their godlesse and superstitious courses, to the knowledge of God, then you shall heare him in another tune: he wil say thē, there we haue a man, some say he is learned, but sure I am he hath troubled vs all, a good many of vs wish he had neuer come amongst vs, we were all quiet before, but now all is out of frame, there is such repprouing & finding of fault, & bringing by of new fashions & orders, that we know not what to do, some of the best of our parish will do what they can to remoue him: these & the like are y^e thoughts and speeches of no small many, and the same no fales in the eyes of the world, who do indeed iustifie preaching by con-

Isa. 66. 2.

Psalme 25. 14.

Tit. 1. 1.

2. Tim 3. 5.

Cic. de Orat. lib. 1

denning it, & shew it to be the power of God by resisting it. Thirdly, for one other specialty drawn from experience: I will appeale vnto mens consciences, whether they be such as feare God or otherwise. They which feare God, & tremble at his words, & do in humility desire to know the secret of the Lord, cannot but acknowledge, that they do much more increase both in the knowledge of the truth, which is according to godlinesse, & in the power of godlinesse, do find their iudgements better strengthened, their faith more confirmed, their consciences more wrought vpon, & their affections more quickened by the word when it is effectually preached & applied, then when it is but only read vnto them. And no maruell, for indeed it cannot be, y^e a brieve clause of holy scripture, wherein in a short tenor of words (such is the riches of the sacred text) many particulars are comprised, being onely read, should profit so much, as if by preaching it were expounded, and according to occasions applied vnto Gods people. If a mā (saith the heathen Orator) come into a wardrobe, where many rich garments are folded vp together in a narrow roome, it cannot

cannot so satisfie him, as if y^e same might
seuerally be layed forth to his view, time
being graunted to take notice of euery
particular; because being lapped vp, he
cannot see the whole beautie, and being
together, he is not able to obserue euery
specialty: euen so it fareth with the scrip-
tures: if a man heare them read, it cannot
but draw him to admire the maiesty and
riches of them, and it wil cast some glim-
mering light vpon the vnderstanding: but
when he heareth them laid open by prea-
ching, it will much moze astonish him, it
wil euen rauish him as it were, casting a
clearer light vpon his iudgement, & wo-
king moze mightily vpon his affections.
This truth, al which truly feare God are
able to iustifie out of their own experiece.
Now for others, I know they also must
yeld to this, that they find y^e word being
vrged and pressed by preaching, to be far
moze powerful, moze piercing, moze ma-
iesticall, moze awaking the conscience,
moze entring through euen vnto the diui- Heb 4. 12.
ding asunder of the soule & the spirit, more
discerning the thoughts and the intents of
the hart: and this is my first reaso fetched
fro experiece, against which there can be

no disputing: for it is in vain to go about to perswade a man that y^e thing is not so, w^h he by obseruatiō hath stil found to be so.

Nymph. I haue wel marked your speech, & duly considered the course of your argument: and as I am wel strengthened by it in that good opiniō which I haue alwaies had of preaching, so I am glad of one thing which I obserued in your discourse, namely that you seem not altogether to condemne reading, nor to desire the banishing of it out of the Church. I can tell you, it is commonly said that you and others such as you are, do mislike the reading of the scriptures.

Epaph. God forbid that I or any man should hold so grosse an error, as to condemne a course of that antiquitie: Moses was read in the synagogue euery Sabboth day; & there was the lecture of the Law & Prophets. And our Sauio^r Ch^rist coming into y^e synagogue on the Sabboth day, stood vp to reade. And for mine owne part, I agree to the opiniō of a learned man of our later times, that reading of y^e holy scriptures in the congregation is good, to that end, that the phrase & maner of speaking of y^e scripture, & the scripture it self might be moze knowne & moze familiar to the people:

Act. 15. 21.

Acts 13. 15.

Mat. 23. 2.

Luke 4. 16.

Bucer vpon Ephes. ca 4.

people: and I confesse also with him, that by that meanes the iudgment of the people is confirmed in al points of religiō so that thereby they are made able to iudge of the interpretation of the scriptures, & of the doctrine taught them by their own teachers or others: all this I willingly acknowledge. And howsoever mē are disposed to interpret it, yet y^e which is spokē in the praise of preaching, tendeth rather to the countenancing then to the disgrace of reading: for he who obserueth it shall find, y^e none in priuate examine the scripture more carefully, none in publike hear it read more respectiue, then those who preaching hath taught to see y^e excellency of Gods word, & the worth of y^e scripture.

Nymphas. You haue done very well to make knowne your iudgement touching the reading of the scripture; for the conceit that you think basely of the word read, is a great prejudice to you in many places, and in many mens opinions. If it please you, come now I pray you to your second reason.

Eppap. The second reason which I haue for the maintaining the efficacy of preaching aboue reading, is grounded vpon the abilitie to preach, which the Lord

as it were of this pꝛofe, that woꝛthy
place in the tenth chapter of the Epistle
to the Romanes, How shall they belecue
in him of whom they haue not heard, and
how shall they heare without a Preacher,
and how shall they preach except they be
sent? The summe of the place is this: that
the hearing of a Preacher which is sent,
is the ordinary meanes oꝛdained of God
to beget faith. From thence ariseth ano-
ther point: that he whose ministry must
be the meanes and instrument to beget
faith, must be a man sent; soꝛ How can
they preach except they be sent? onely that
man is a preacher, which is sent. Now
if we shall examine what it is to be sent,
it will appeare to be true, that a suffici-
ent minister to cal Gods people, must be
a man of better qualitie then a bare rea-
der of the Scripture. To be sent there-
foꝛe is this, to be appointed and depu-
ted of God, and (as the Lord speaketh
of Ieremie) sanctified, oꝛ (as Paul say-
eth of himselfe) put apart to that seruice.
Were it not now a pꝛesumptuous and
ouerbold imputation of a certaine disso-
lute carelesnes vnto the wisest and most
pꝛouident God, to say oꝛ thinke that he

Jeremy 1. 5.
ⲁⲑⲁⲣⲓⲁⲓⲱⲓⲧ
Rom. 1. 1.

2.Tim.1.11.
Ephes.4.12.

Prouer.26.6.

would put any man in his seruice, for the worke of the ministry. vntlesse the same were so gifted and qualified, as is meete for the discharge of so weighty a businesse? Salomon sayth, that He that sendeth a message by the hand of a foole (that is, of a man vnable to deliuer the tenor of his message, and to open it to him to whom it is sent) is as he that cutteth off the foote. It is as if he should bid a man go, and yet chop off his foote wherewith he should trauel. A Prince purposing an ambassage to another Prince, thinketh it not enough that the man whom he wil employ in that seruice, be able to carry his errand written in a paper, and faithfully to deliuer it according to directions (for that euery ordinary Currey and common Post may do) but he maketh choise of one that hath had the best breeding, a man of good vnderstanding, of good discourse, of good behauior, and of no lesse discretion, who is in these respects able to debate and manage those great affaires, as may be most for the behoofe and honorable aduantage of him that sendeth him. Shall we thinke God to be lesse carefull for the businesse of his Church,

church, then earthly Princes be for their State causes? Shall a man of the best qualitie be sought out for the carrying of a message from one man to another? and shall one of the meanest sufficiency haue the ministry of reconciliation betwixt God and man giuen vnto him? God forbid. Let all these things then be put together: First, that he whose ministry shall be the means to breed faith, is a man sent, which the text auoucheth. Secondly, that to be sent, is to be gifted in that measure, as is agreeing to the waight of so great a calling, which common sense will not suffer vs to deny. Thirdly, that to be able only to reade y^e scripture, is a common gift, and a facultie of no great note, which euery man wel knoweth. Let these things I say be put together, and you shall find them as a threefold cord, not easily broken, building vp and strengthening this truth, that the man not graced with any more then the power to reade, is not the Minister appointed by God for the working of faith in the hearts of his people. Againe, to presse this place yet further, this is the constant doctrine of the scripture, that

2. Cor. 5. 18.

Eccles. 4. 12.

no Minister can haue comfort in the day
of the Lord, but onely he who is able to
say with Ieremie, I haue not thrust my self
in for a Pastor. **fo2** wo shall be vnto those
of whom the Lord shall say, I haue not
sent these Prophets, yet they ran. **So that**
it standeth euey man vpon, who desi-
reth that worthy worke, the office of an
ouerseer in Gods Church, to be wel assu-
red of his calling, least in the day of sur-
uey it be said vnto him as was said vnto
the guest without the wedding garmēt,
Friend how camest thou hither? **W2** as to
the wicked in the Psalm, What hast thou
to do to declare mine ordinances, that thou
shouldest take my couenant in thy mouth?
Now, by what meanes can a man know
himselfe to be sent and called of God to
the seruice of his church? there is no reue-
lation to be looked fo2, neither is it to be
expected that God should call by some
immediate voyce, as he did y^e Prophets,
o2 as he did Paul: & yet there is a meanes
and course as certaine herein, as if the
Lord should say directly by a voyce soun-
ding in our eares, Go, behold haue not I
sent thee? It is in this matter, as it is in
that of election. A man that is carefull
(acco2

Ieremy. 17. 16.

Ieremy 23. 21.

1 Timothy. 3. 1.

Mathew 22. 12

Psalm 50. 16.

Ade 9.

(according to the rule of the holy Ghost) to make his calling and election sure, must 2 Pet. 1.10. not presume to search the vnsearchable counsels of God, neither yet waite for some speciall intelligence from heaven, but he must enter into his owne heart, and rise vp by degrees from the fruites of sanctification to his being iustified, from iustification to his effectual calling, from thence to election, and from all these conclude eternall glozificatiō in Gods kingdome: this is a sure course, to be led by the streames vp to the well head. Not much vnlike is the course in iudging of a mans calling to the ministry. I may in some sort apply the speech of Paul in another case to this purpose: Say not Rom. 10. 6. thou that affectest the ministry, who shall ascend vp into heauen, to assure mee what is Gods purpose touching mee: for there is another way, The testimonie of thy being sent (if thou art sent) is neare thee, euen in thy mouth, and in thy heart. Inquiry must be made by a man in this behalfe, in what measure God hath fitted him to be a 2 Cor. 13. 6. minister of the new Testament. Now may a man with a safe conscience, or

with any good ground make himselfe
 beleue that God hath sent him, and
 called him to the ministry, because he is
 able to reade distinctly the text of holy
 scripture? Can this one facultie be a suf-
 ficient testimonie to a mans owne soule,
 that he is one of the appointed labourers
 for Gods harvest? Shall a man aduen-
 ture to undertake the cure and care of
 soules vpon so slender preparation?
 Surely (for as much as I can conceiue)
 the doctrine of the Scripture, describing
 the office of a Minister, is against it.
 This vse I haue made of this place:
 the summe is this: the ordinary meanes
 to beget faith, is the hearing of a Prea-
 cher sent, that is, so furnished with gifts
 suitable to his calling, that both in re-
 spect of the tence of his message, and
 his abilitie, to manifest the riches of the
 glorious mytenc of Christ, his very seete
 may deserue to be called Beautifull: but
 neither is bare reading to be numbred
 among those gifts which might argue
 a man to be sent, neither is it safe for
 any man to adventure vpon no better
 sufficiencie. Therefore there is more
 required in him who must be heard for
 the

Mat. 9:3.

Col. 1:27.

Rom. 10:15.

the breeding of faith, then the naked facultie of deliuering to the people out of a booke the letter of the Scripture.

Nymph. But by your leaue sir, that which you speake touching sending, I feare me how it will be well taken: for hath not the Church the power of sending and calling to the Ministry? If then a man able onely to reade the scripture, be by the Church appointed to that office, is not that a sufficient warrant to him in this case?

Epaph. The calling by the Church, I acknowledge to be so necessary, that without it (a settled forme of Church gouernement being established) no man is to be reputed a lawfull Minister, though he be otherwise of neuer so great sufficiency. God I know calleth men extraordinaryly sometimes, as namely, in the first founding & planting of the Church: so were the Apostles and Euangelists called: and when the Church of God is defaced, & an vniuersall Apostasie spread ouer it: so it is thought they were called who restozed the sinceritie of religion, after the long night of Popery. But this extraordinary kind of calling neuer ta-

keth place but when ordinary calling faileth. Now though the calling and allowance of the Church is necessary, yet it is not sufficient to the being of a minister. The office of the Church is onely to approue, it is God that maketh a minister. And therefore the Church is tied to a law, to lay hands sodainly vpon no man, but to proue first, and to vse a very precise examinatio befoze they separate any mā to the office of a minister. The Churches duty is to search out what men the Lord hath chosen, to take a part in the ministration. I know there may be an error committed herein, and men in their choises and elections may be deceiued. It fareth many times with the gouernours of the Church, as it did with Ioab in the campe. When Absolom was slain, & the army of those which ioyned with him in the conspiracie was ouerthrowne, Ioab was purposed by a messenger to informe Dauid of the successe of the battel: hereupon one Ahimaaz offered himselfe to be the carier of tidings: Ioab put him backe, taking another, one Cushy to be the fitter for that seruice. Ahimaaz notwithstanding continued to importune Ioab, What

1. Timoth. 5. 22

1. Timoth. 3. 10.

2d. Cor. 12. 18.
p. 1. 25.

2. Sam. 18.

(I pray thee) if I run also after Cush? And againe, Yet what if I runne? and neuer left vntil he had obtained licence to run also. Having gotten this leaue to run, he ran by the way of the plaine and ouer-went Cush, and came first to Dauid, and made wise, as if he could haue told great tidings. But when the king came to particulars, then he was silent, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what. The case so standeth many times in the church. The spiritual Ioaabs, the leaders of Gods people, intend perhaps to send none but Cushies, men of whose faithfulness and sufficiency they haue good experience: but yet happily some Ahimaaz or other, some that might well stay so beare tidings another time, steppeth in and putteth forward himselfe, and by importunitie purchaseth that which otherwise desert could not obtaine, and so runneth by the way of the plaine (that common and too much troden path of Symony) and ouergoeth the worthier; and being first come into the face of Gods Church, seemeth to be able to bring out of his treasure, things both old and new. But if you grow with him into particulars, you shall find him

2yue. Heb.
13.7.

Mathew 13.52

Mathew 22. 12.

like the guest in the Gospel, euen speech-
lesse, so that he must be faine to stand aside
till Cushi cometh to resolue you. Thus
I say an error may happen, and an ouer-
sight may be committed euen by the best
Ouerseers. But when this negligence be-
commeth a custome, and it wareth an or-
dinary matter, to make of the lowest of
the people Priests of the high places, so
that in a maner who will may consecrate
himselſe, then a man may well crie with
Dauid, It is time for thee Lord to worke:
Arise, O God, and lift vp thine hand. And
how feareful a thing it is, for those which
willingly suffer it, may appeare by an
example not much vnlike. God sent Sa-
muel to annoint one of Ishai his sons, to
be King ouer Israel: Samuel seeing Eliab,
because of his countenance & the height
of his stature, said, Surely the Lords an-
nointed is before him. The like conceipt
had he of the rest of his brethren: but yet
he receiued still a secret information, The
Lord hath chosen none of these. But case
that Samuel notwithstanding this directi-
on giuen him, had tooke the horne of oile
and annointed some other beside Dauid,
had it not bene great contempt to haue

1. Kings. 13. 33.

Psal. 119. 126.

Psalme. 10. 13.

1. Sam. 16.

proceeded contrary to commaund? So in this case, they to whom the office and fundiō of laying on of hands belongeth in Gods Church, when the Lord shall say expressely in his word, I haue not chosen this man, he is not gifted for this weightie businesse: if they for all that shall giue the outward allowance of a Minister to him, whom in their certaine knowledge God hath not graced with gifts sufficient for the calling of a Minister, what punishment in all likelihood this rashnesse is liable vnto, I leaue it to euery mans conscience that feareth God to examine. And I pray God giue them whom it concerneth hearts to consider it.

Nymph. I ioyne with you in your good desire: and yet perhaps men of place may pleade a kind of necessitie, to admit men of no better sufficiencie, there being not that store of learned men and Preachers, to furnish euery seuerall congregation.

Epaph. What is to be boꝛne withall in cases of ineuitable necessity is one thing, & what is to be permitted when the good means is not wanting is another thing: for this our land, first I think there was neuer any trial taken, whether the num-

Mathew 20 6,7

Canticles 4. 2.

Ephes. 4. 8.

ber of learned men were proportionable to the tale of severall parishes: Secondly the Universities are like to the market place, in which stand many of good quality, of whom if you demaund Why stand ye here? they wil answer, Because no man hath hired vs. And the severall colledges, be (as it is said of the tath of the spouse) like a flock of sheepe in good order, which go vp from the washing, which euery one bring out twins, and none is barren among them. Thirdly, the scripture telleth vs, that Christ ascended vp on high to giue gifts vnto men: why then should we think his hand so shortned, as that it should be deemed vnpossible to furnish this whole Church with preaching Ministers? Fourthly, if that be true which some say, that there are more learned men in England then in all the reformed Churches of Europe besides, then there is no cause to plead any such necessitie. And therfore I account that as a colour rather then any argument.

Nymph. I feare me sir, I haue too much interrupted you: I pray you therefore proceed in your proof of this point, that there is a necessitie layed vpon euery Minister that

that shall vndertake the cure of soules, to be able to do more then barely to reade the holy scriptures vnto the people.

Epaph. The next reason which I haue to strengthen this principle, is grounded vpon this, because I find by the scripture that it is a matter of very great difficultie to be a good Minister. There are two things principally required in a minister: the one, that he be able to exhort with wholesome doctrine: the other, that he haue skill to improve them that say againt it. *Th. 2. 9.* Whereto agreeth that saying of Augustine, that He must be a maintainer of truth, and a withstander of error. *Veritatis propugnator & erroris expugnator. Aug. de Doctr. Chr. lib. 4. cap. 4. 1. Counth 39.* For which cause the spirituall builders in Gods building, which is his Church, are not vnfitly compared to those who builded the temple in Nehemiashis time, who did the worke with the one hand, and with the other held the sword. *Nehem. 4. 17.* It is a shame for a minister, if it shall fall out with his spirituall worke as Tobias the Ammonite sayd in scoone of the reedified City and Temple by the Jewes, *Nehem. 4. 1.* Although they build, yet if a Fox go vppe he shall euen breake downe their stonie wall. So, I say, it shall be a blemish to a

Canticles 2. 15.

Isay 50. 4.

1. Timoth 3. 15.

Titus. 1. 10. 11.

teacher in Gods Church, if he shall build so weakely that those fores, those little fores (of whom the spouse complaineth) shall be able by & by to breake downe the building. Well then, let any man consider either of these two, and tell me whether it be not a matter of very great difficulty in any good measure to perfozme it. The Prophet Isay sayth, that the Lord had giuen him a tongue of the learned, for y^e one peece of seruice, that he might know to minister a word in time to him that is wearie: and yet this is but one branch of a Ministers office. If we shall adde to it other particulars, such as are wisdom in admonishing, courage in repprouing, soundnesse in opening the treasure of the holy text, discretio in applying according to times & persons, with the like, which are required of euery Minister in his place: then we cannot but yeld, that he had need to be able to do something more then read, who shall seek to behaue himself in the house of God as he ought to do. Now for that other part, which standeth in stopping the mouthes of vaine talkers and deceiuers of mens minds, which oppose them selues against Gods truth:

it

it is (as Augustine well sayth) a matter requiring moze painefull and plentiful learning, as shall appeare to him that shall consider either the multitude of false opinions, or the quality of those which do defend them. For the multitude, this is a cleare case, that whereas euery former age hath brought forth some one or moe, to the disturbance of the peace of Gods Church, and to the exercising of the best learned that each time could affoord, all these are flowne together into this last age as into a common sewer. So that there is not any error which the former times knew, and withall condemned to the pit of hell, but this our age hath raked it vp againe, and set (as it were) a new glosse vpon it, and made it by addition much moze dangerous. Besides, we haue Popery, which is a fardle of heresies, and the very compound of all the rest. Now for the quality of those which are the patrons thereof, (of Popery especially) it is well knowne that though they haue among them, as it was said of old, many wooden priests, all whose learning hangeth at their girdle in their Portuis, yet they which in

*Operosiorū, & be-
riorū doctrina.
Aug. in Euch.
ad Laur.*

*Ligatus Sacerdos
Bonifac.*

Luk. 16. 8.

these our times haue put forth themselves to support the drouping and decaying kingdome of Antichrist, are no punies, but many of them men of excellent wits, deepe learning, and vniwearied industry: by their writings, and booke, and disputations, making good the saying of our Sauio^r Christ, The children of this world are in their generation wiser then the children of light. Now then to discover the force of my intended reason, I draw it to these heads: first, I know that whosoever should undertake out of the scripture to describe the office of a Pasto^r, he cannot without a palpable betraying of the truth leaue out these two things which I haue named, the ability to teach the obedient child^r of the Church, and the skill to oppose himselfe against the enemies of the Church. Secondly, this I know also, that he that shall either by discourse examine, or by personall experience try the difficulty of well performing these duties, will say with S. Paul, VWho is sufficient for these things? and acknowledge with Bernard, that the ministry is a burden, which the Angels themselves may wel tremble at. Thirdly,

*Angeli etiam
inquit. 2. Cor. 12.
16.
Onus est velut
Angeli formi-
dandum gerant.*

Thirdly, I am as cleere in this, as in any of the two former, that there is no such difficulty in the faculty of reading, which as it is the first step to learning, so it is of all other things incident to a scholler the most easie. So that, seeing to hold opinion, that an onely reading Minister is a sufficient Minister, maketh that calling of all other the most easie, which in it own nature, as it is described to vs in the scripture, is most laborious, requiring so studious preparation to it, and so great intention & diligence in the performance of it, I must needs settle my selfe vpon this point, & perswade others also to it, that there is moze required in a minister of the new Testament, then to reade the scripture, though I still hold that a part of his duty, and (as I haue sayd before) a matter very behouefull for the spirituall benefite of Gods Church.

Nym. I could easily agree to that which you haue said, onely this doubt something stayeth me: if you hold no man a full Minister, except the same be able to preach, what shall we think then of the sacraments administred by such; how can they be true sacraments if such be no true Ministers?

Caluin. In 7. lib.
4. ca. 15. se. 3. 16.

Epaph. For answer to that doubt, first this is a true and a receiued rule, that a sacrament is not to be esteemed by the hand of him which administreth it: neither doeth the dignitie of the deliuerer, adde worth to the sacrament, noz the indignity lessen the true nature of it. Secondly, he which hath an outward calling by the Church, though happely he be vnworthye and vnmeet for the place whereto he is called, yet he is to be reputed as moze then a priuate man: and therefore because by the appointment of the Church he standeth in the roome of a right and lawfull Minister, if there be no fault in the substance of the action of administering, the sacraments are true sacraments, though the party executing that office be not altogether so allowable. The Scribes and Pharisees, who were the Doctors of the Jewes, many of them were of other Tribes then of the tribe of Leui, and crept in by corruption and bribery into those places, and were of vnsound iudgement in many things, as many easily be gathered by the story of the Gospell; yet our Sauioz willed his Disciples to heare them, because they

late

sate in Moses chaire. Their entrance was naught, yet their ministry was to be esteemed, so long as they failed not in the substance thereof. And this (I thinke) may resolute you for that matter. Mathew 23.2.3

Nymphas. I will rest satisfied with this answer, til I shal find either by mine owne priuate meditation, or by conference with others (better skilled in these points then I) what further to reply. I desire to heare you yet further in this matter, touching the necessitie of preaching in a Minister.

Epaph. I am very willing to proceed, onely I would haue you to remember what I sayd at my first entrance into this matter, namely, that I would stand onely vpon pzoofes of Scripture. S. Augustine sayth, that that was the auncient order of disputing, to haue the bookes of holy scripture by, and to stand to the triall thereof. And therefore it was an excellent & memoizable course of Constantine the Emperoz, who commaunded the Fathers met together in the Councell of Nice, to refer that great controuersie then in hand, touching the Godhead of Christ, to the decision of the Scripture. And it is Gods owne voyce Epist 163.
Theodor. 1. 1. c. 5

Lia 8. 20.

that we should to the law, and to the testimonie. Wherefore wishing you to looke for no proofes from me, but such as are fetchen out of the scripture, I set this downe as my third reason, that whereas the Lord made very good prouision for the maintenance of those who were to minister about holy things, I find not either in the old or new Testament that any were prouided for by such allowaunce, but onely such as were able to instruct the people by opening and expounding the law. The office of the Levites in the old law, stood vpon two things, one was to put incense before the Lords face, and the burnt offering vpon his altar; therein they were the peoples mouth vnto God: the other was to teach Iaakob Gods iudgement, and Israel his law: in that they were Gods mouth vnto the people: for this cause it was the ordinance of God (according as I noted to you the place in the beginning of this conference) that the Priests lips should preferue knowledge, and they should seek the law at his mouth: for (sayth the text) he is the messenger of the Lord of hostes: that is, one appointed to be the opener and declarer of the will of

Deuter 33. 10.

Mal. 2. 7

of God among the people. And lest any man should thinke, that the law which the people were to seeke at the Priestes mouth, was nothing but the bare letter and written text of the law, we may remember first, that the people had the free vse of the law in their priuat houses, Deuteron. 6. 7. so that they had no such neede to seeke that at the Priests hands. Secondly, that it was the vse of the Levites when they did reade in the booke of the law, to giue the sense also, and to cause the people to vnderstand the reading. Nehemiah 8. 3. And hence it was, that when our Sauio^r Christ stood vp to reade on the Sabbaoth day, Luce 4. 16. & c. (according to his office, as some thinke that he was chosen one of the ordinary two and twenty Priests of the Temple) See this in dictionary. 12606 when he had closed the booke, the eyes of all that were in the synagogue were fastened on him; because it was the order that presently vpon the reading of the law, followed the exposition of the law. Thence also was it that Paul & Barnabas being at Antioch vpon a Sabbaoth day, After the Lecture of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent vnto them, to intreate them, that if they had Acts 13. 15.

Acts 15. 21.

Hos. 4. 6

any word of exhortation, they would be pleased to deliuer it. This their request arose vpon the custome of ioyning still the opening and interpreting of the law with the publike reading thereof, where-
 to agreeth that saying of Iames that Mo-
 ses was of old time in euery citie, both read
 and preached euery Saboth day. Thirdly,
 this may be noted also, that whereas
 the Lord threatned to refuse them, that
 they should be no priests to him, who had
 refused knowledge: by that refusing of
 knowledge is to be vnderstood both their
 ignozance in the doctrine of the law, and
 their negligence to informe the people
 in it: otherwise to thinke that there was
 nothing reproued in them moze, then an
 vnabilitie to reade the law, were a very
 grosse conceit. And thus much to pzooue
 that for the times of the old testament,
 none had the allowance of Priests, but
 such as were able to instruct. Now for
 the times of the Gospell, S. Paul thus de-
 clareth the continuance of the equitie of
 that auncient law, that like as of old,
 They which did minister about the holy
 things, did eate of the things of the Tem-
 ple, and they which did waite at the altar,
 were

were partakers of the altar: so also it is ordained by the Lord, that they which preach the Gospell, should liue of the Gospell: none haue any right to liue of the Gospell, that is, of the exhibition and salary of the Church, but those which preach the Gospell. If you demand of me what it is to preach the Gospell, Paul shall resolute you in another place; namely it is this, to labour in the word and doctrine: which whether it be not more then to reade the word, I refer it to any mans iudgement. Chrysostome sayth, that these words require of a Minister, that he do preach, and teach, and make sermons: and the old rule of the law, which Paule applieth to the purpose, requireth so much, Thou shalt not muzzle the mouth of the oxe that treadeth out the corne. The oxe that is allowed to eate of the corne, is not he onely which treadeth vpon the corne, but which treadeth it out, that worketh it out of the huskes, that it may be fit for mans vse. So he is to eate of the maintenance of the church who is able to set the word of God (the spirituall foode) before the people, not only in the eare (as it were) in the words

1. Cor. 9. 13. 14.

1. Timot. 5. 17.

It's practice, doctrine & conscience.

and letter of the scripture, but in the true sense and interpretation of it. It is an excellent saying of S. Hierome, Let vs not thinke (sayth he) that the Gospell is in the words of the scripture, but in the sense, not in the outward face, but in the marrow thereof: and as Basill speaketh, not in the sound of the ayre, but in the power of the things meant. I would haue thee (sayth Tertullian) exercise thy selfe to the sense of the matter, and not to the sound of the word. It is a rule among Lawyers, that not the bare words is the law, but the meaning of the law. And in the scripture, they are sayd to teach the law, which shew the sentence or substance & matter of the law. So then, he is a Teacher allowed to liue vpon the common charge, which treadeth out (as I may so speake, alluding to the similitude of the ore) the sense of the scripture out of the letter of the scripture; and stayeth not (as Hierome speaketh in the fore-remembred place) in the leaues of words, but searcheth to the roote of the vnderstanding thereof. You may (if you wil) adde hereto that other place of Paul to this purpose, Let him that is taught in the

In Com. 1. cap.
ad Galatas: non
in verbu sed in
sensu, non in su-
perficie sed in
Medulla.

Basil lib. 3. con-
tra Eunomium.

Tertull aduersus
Prax. ad sensum
rei non ad sonum
vocalium.

Sensu Legu, lex
est non nuda
verba.

Deut. 17. 16. 11.

In sermonum
Folys.
Ad radicem ra-
tionu.

Gal. 6. 6 ὁ κηρυτ-
τῆς τοῦ λόγου
ἐκτρέφεται.

the word, make him that hath taught him partaker of all his goods. **He that wil haue a share in the tempoꝛal goods of the people, must let them receiue spirituall good from him.** **He who looketh to eate of the milke of the flock, (that is as it is expounded by Augustine, of that which is giuen by the people for the sustenance of their ouerscers) must in equity not be wanting to affoord them that which may be for the building vp of their soules in Christ Iesus: otherwise there is no proportion.** And were it not that men did more affect pride then painfulnesse, the fat and the wooll of the flocke, then the feeding of the sheep, this doctrine would neuer be gainsayd; we should not then haue that iust cause to lament the state of so many, whom we see scattered abroad as sheepe hauing no shepheard: neither to complaine with Augustine, that there are many who reioyce in the name of Pastors, but care not to fulfill the office of Pastors. Thus haue you my third reason, which though it hath bene stretched out by something a large discourse, yet it may be reduced to this brieft: the word of God providing a maintenance

*Augustinus in d.
de Pastoribus.*

*Pasum hominis
quam pasum o-
uinis. Bernardus
423.
Ez. ch 34.3.*

*Matth 9.16.
Sunt qui pastores
nomine gaudent.
pastorum autem
officium implere
nolunt. In lib. de
Pastoribus.*

Tim. 1 Tim. 5.
17.

of honoꝝ foꝛ the Ministers of his church,
hath not giuen allowance to any to linc
by it, but onely to men able to instruct, by
opening the scripture, therefore there is
moze required in a Minister then to be
able to reade the scripture.

Nymph. You haue so well and through-
ly satisfied me for this matter by these your
three reasons, that I will not vrge you fur-
ther; onely I wil pray you to teach me how
to answer some exceptions and pretenced
reasons, some against the necessitie of prea-
ching, some for the sufficiencie of reading.

Epaph. I am willing to follow you,
seeing I entred into this matter foꝛ your
sake: and if hereafter any doubt shall a-
rise in your mind vpon further scanning,
touching these things which haue bene
sayd, I hope God will affoꝝd vs opoꝝtu-
nity further to debate them. If you will
therefoꝛe let me heare what you haue
heard pleaded by those which are of a
different opinion. I doubt not but by the
grace of Christ you shall find the truth to
be as it is wel called, An eternal victoꝛy:
and that (as that woꝛthy Romane sayd
sometime) though it be often too much
withstood, yet it can neuer be cleane ex-
tinguished.

Nymph.

*Veritas eterna
victoria. Aug de
ciu. Dei l. 2. c. 29.
Fab. Max apud
Liu. li. 22 sape
laborare nimis,
victoria vincit.*

Nymph. It is sayd by some, that this opinion touching the necessitie of expounding and opening the scripture by preaching, doeth derogate from the dignitie of the scripture, and doth seeme to fauour the doctrine of Poperie, touching the obscuritie and darknesse of the holy writte, as though there were such necessitie of a Teacher to come to the vnderstanding of it.

Epaph. The answer to this is easie. Touching the Scriptures, God forbid but we should acknowledge that they are both in their owne nature light, and such also, which by the beames thereof do giue light vnto the eyes. And it is true which S. Austine sayth, that all matters necessary to faith and manners, are to be found in those things which are set downe plainly in the Scripture: and therefore, we do both exhort to the reading of the scriptures priuately, and commend the publike rehearsing of them in the congregation. Yet this is no whit contrary to the opinion touching the necessity of preaching. And so much shall evidently appeare, if we marshall our hearers into three companies. The first

Pfalm. 119. 105.
Pfal. 119. 8.

Paulē ascribeth
to the worde
both *εὐς* light,
and *φωτισμός*
enlightning: 3.
Cor. 4. 6.

Aug de Doctr.
(hr. lib 2. cap. 9.
In is que apertis
posita sunt.

sort are grossely ignorant, and extremely negligent in the matters of God. The second are of some better both care to looke into the scriptures, and capacitie to conceiue them. The third are as well able to sound out the truth by the priuat study of the scripture, as those who be professed Diuines. There is no hearer (I meane among our people professing the present Religion) but he belongeth to one of these three ranks. Now for the former of these, preaching cannot but be most necessary: for as in their negligence of themselves they will neuer seeke for knowledge, but it must euen in a kind of violence be put vpon them, so in their ignorance the plaine text read wil profit them nothing, vnlesse with it be ioyned the skilfull industry of some painefull workman, who by framing himselfe to the shallow capacitie of the silliest, and by adding precept to precept, line to line, here a little and there a little, may drop in some knowledge, and thorough often sharpening of the necessary points of Religion, may make something to enter. Secondly for the hert sort, which according to Christs commandemēt do search
the

2. Timoth. 2. 15.

Ad infantū &

in senium cap. 3

curat. Aug. in

Psalm 8.

Isay 28. 10.

Deut. 6. 9. acutē

ingeres Tren.

John 5. 39.

the scripture, though I know they shall find their spirituall hunger to be satisfied by many plaine and comfortable places, yet they shall many times be so plunged & set as it were, that they shall say with the Eunuch, How can I vnderstand, except I had a guide? It is Gods wisdom, as well to exercise vs with hard places, as to feede vs with those which are perspicuous, both to teach vs to pray with Dauid, that the Lord would open our eyes that we may see the wonders of his law, and withall to establish the necessity of the publike ministry, and to teach vs humilitie, when we must be faine to depend vpon the instruction of others. As for the third kind, who perhaps are able because of education in good letters, to search out the mystery of the text by their owne priuate industry, as well as the most sufficient Preacher, yet as I doubt not but the same shall euen better their iudgements by the meanest sermon (if that be a fit tearme to be given to a sermon, in which Gods truth is soundly deliuered) so I am sure they shall find hearing to be very behouefull, if it be for no other thing, yet (as a learned father well

*Spiritus sanctus
sanas nostra con-
silia in locis a-
perioribus Augu-
stinus de Doctr.
Chr. lib. 2. cap. 6.*

Acts 8.31.

*Pascit manife-
stus, exercet oc-
culos. August.
Tract. 45. in Ioh.*

Psal. 119. 18.

*(Christ. Hier. 44.
in opere imper-
fecto in Math.
ut ait essent Do-
ctores, alij Disci-
puli.)*

*Id est non est
iniquitas. (Hier.
Rom. 3. 2. Ties.)*

2. Thessal. 3. 13.

2. Pet. 1. 8.

Rom. 15. 14-15.

Luke 1. 4.

obserueth it) for their owne sluggishnes,
 that so they may be quickened vp to good
 duties, we being all in nature so prone
 though we know much, yet to be weary
 of well doing, and to be idle and vnfruitful
 in the knowledge of our Lord Iesus Christ.
 It is an excellent saying of the Apostle
 Paul writing to the Romanes, and well
 fitting this purpose: I my selfe (saith he)
 am perswaded of you my brethien that ye
 are also full of goodnes, and filled with all
 knowlege, and are able to admonish one a-
 nother: what greater comendation could
 be: these men might seem not to need any
 further instruction: but marke what fol-
 loweth, Neuerthelesse brethren, I haue
 somewhat boldly after a sort written vnto
 you, as one that putteth you in remem-
 brance, through the grace that is given me
 of God. Though a man haue attained to
 neuer so great perfection in knowledge,
 yet he standeth stil in need of a Preacher,
 though it be but to be a remembrancer
 vnto him. Theophilus was wel instructed
 in the mystery of Christ, yet Lukes Gospell
 was needfull for him, that he might ac-
 knowledge the certaintie of those things.
 Preaching is not superfluous, though a
 man

man were neuer so cunning. This brieue
 view of the state of our severall hearers,
 may serue to make this good, that to vige
 the necessitie of preaching as the meanes
 to beget faith, is no derogation to that
 doctrine which we hold, touching the
 brightnes and plainnes of the scripture.
 The scripture is as a light shining in a ^{2. Pet. 1. 19.}
 dark place, but neither do all looke into it,
 neither can al that heare it read publikly
 conceine it, vnlesse they be prepared to it
 by some former familiar instructiōs, nei-
 ther do al that peruse the booke of God, so
 fully vnderstand all that they neede no
 teacher, neither yet can any man though
 of neuer so good parts, attaine to that ful-
 nes, as that he shal not (at the least) stand
 in need of an admonisher. It is a good ob-
 seruation (in my iudgement) of him, who <sup>Wals. in 2^d
cap. 8.</sup>
 saith that the word is indeed light, but the
 preaching Minister is as ^{Mat. 5. 15.} γ candlestick, of
 which Christ speaketh, by which γ word
 of God giueth light vnto all that are in the
 house. And indeede this similitude may
 haue γ better approbatiō, if we note how
 by the candlestick which the Lord Iesus ^{Reuel. 1.}
 threatneth to remoue out of the church of
 Ephesus, is meant especially γ ministry

John 1.9.
Luke 1.79.

Reuel. 1.16.17.

Psalmc 119.105

of y^e word. God doth all things by means (ordinarily). Christ is the true light, which giveth light to them that sit in darknes, yet the faithful Ministers of severall congregations are said to be stailes in his right hand, by which he giveth light vnto his church. If this be true, I see not what inconuenience can follow vpon it, if we say, though the word be a lanterne, yet it then giveth best, & clearest, & fullest light when it is lifted vp as it were, and the brightnes thereof caused to spread forth into euery corner, by the skill and paines of a sufficient Minister.

Nymp. Another exception vsed by some, whose endeouour is to equall (if not to preferre) bare reading vnto preaching, is, that there is more certaintie in the word read, then in that which you preach: that which is read, men are sure is Gods word, but they haue not the like assurance of that which is preached.

Epaph. If you desire a short & direct answer to this exception, take it thus. This allegation touching the certaintie of the word read aboue the doctrine preached, is not true. There are in our congregations three sorts of people especially: first, ignorant

ignozant persons : secondly , cauillers :
and lastly,iudiciall and carefull hearers.
The ignozant are as vncertaine tou-
ching that which we call the scripture,
whether it be be the word of God , as
they be touching our preaching : they
haue no assurance of it, but tradition and
report, which is a poore certainty, & they
haue as good an opinion of the Apocripa
books, as of the other which we call cano-
nical. Besides that, it is buzzed into many
of our common peopless eares, by whispe-
ring Papists, & it is thereby become ordi-
nary in many mouthes here in y country
that our Bible is no true Bible, and that
our translation is iustly to be doubted of.
Secondly, those that are possessed with a
humor of cauilling, may as wel demand
how they know the scripture to be scrip-
ture, & those things to be true which are
writtē in it, as how they may be resolved
that our preaching is the truth. Thirdly,
your best hearers, which heare as Christ
sayth with a good and an honest heart, to Luke 8.15.
them the certainty of the truth in the
written text and in the sermon is both a-
like : for as they haue a certaine secret
teaching by the spirit of God (which

1. Iohn 2. 20.

Rom. 3. 2.

Diod. Sax. 1.

1. Thel. 4. 9

Loquitor and coo

runt / cum / qua

gostum. Ep. 3.

Epist. 61. ad The-
ophil. cap. 2.

S. Iohn calleth by ψ name of an ointment from him that is holy) whereby they are perswaded of the truth of the scripture, and do account it the oracle of God, (in respect whereof they are said to be taught by God: and Austine sayth, God speaketh to our hearts): so also they are enabled by the same spirit to iudge of that doctrine which they heare by the scripture, and equally to embrace points confirmed by it, and those which are expressely and in so many words revealed in it. So th \bar{e} there is no moze certainty of the text, then of the doctrine preached out of ψ text. Those which are ignorant, or dispose to cauill, are doubtful of both alike: for the one are blockish & know nothing, the other are humorous and will be satisfied with nothing. Again, those which are Gods children, are alike assured of both: of the text by the secret perswasion of Gods spirit: of the doctrine, by triall taken of it by the text. I remember a saying of S. Hieromes; I know (sayth he) that I otherwise esteem of the Apostles, then of other treatisers: the Apostles I know spake alwayes ψ truth; the other as men in many things were deceiued. The speech may well

well be applied to this purpose: the books of holy Scripture we must yield consent vnto them without refusall, because it is certaine that they are all given by inspiration of God, so that there is nothing in them of any priuate motion but as for the writings and preachings of men, they are not to be credited before they be tried whether they are of God. Thus much willingly is acknowledged: but yet after this triall made, and by the dayly searching of the scriptures, those things which in preaching are delinered are found to be so; then the doctrines though drawne out of the text by the art and wit of man, and otherwise amplified, enlarged, and vrged by the helps of learning, are not to be called the opinions of a man, but the words of God. It is a good rule of the learned, that those points which are collected out of the scripture, are of like authority with those which are directly writtē in it. The Paul being at Thessalonica went into the synagoge of the Jewes, and disputed with them by the scriptures, I hope no man will say, but that those things which he by argument & discourse drew out of the writtē word, were of equal authority

Sine & Barcusatione. August. de nat. & gra. ca. 60

2. Tim. 3. 16.

2. Pet. 1. 20.

1. Iohn 4. 1.

Acts 17. 11.

1. Pet. 4. 11.

*hoc est quod
Perinde sunt ea
qua ex scrip. col-
liguntur atque ea
qua scribuntur.
Nazian lib. 5.
de Theolog.
Αὐτὸ τὸ πρᾶγμα
Acts 17. 2.*

Advintio.
AAs 16.22.

AAs 10.27.

AAs 17.11.

with points expressely mentioned . Paul pleading befoze Agrippa, stood stiffely to the iustifying of his doctrine, because he had said no other things but those which the Prophets & Moses did say shold come. His doctrine was the same with the doctrine of Moses and the Prophets, yet not in words, but in sense and substance. And the same Apostle is not afraid to call his preaching The counsell of God, though it were in regard of the tenor and course of speech, differing from the expresse letter of the text. If it shall be said unto me, that there is a difference betwixt our sermons and Pauls, I willingly confesse it: but yet I say, that euen Pauls sermons were subiect to the like triall that ours be, as appeareth by the practise of the Noblemen of Beræa. And therefore as his preaching was not to be esteemed as the word of God, till triall, and being tried was equally to be reuerenced as the written word it selfe: so neither are our sermons to be by and by credited vpon our bare word, but to be thoroughly examined; but being once found to hold at the touch-stone, then they are so to be reputed Gods word, that

that it may be safely said, He that despiseth them, despiseth not man but God. And indeed unless we shall give equall credit and respect to matters soundly proved by scripture, and to points expressed in it, we shall hazard the truth of many, and the same no petty principles of Religion, which I know are substantially confirmed by scripture, but yet are not words for words so to be found in the sacred text, as we maintaine them. And this I think may be a sufficient answer to this objection. Tell me, I pray you, how you do conceive it?

Nymph. As far as I can coniecture, your answer is this: that when that course of due triall (which is meete) is taken, touching things taught by preaching, then the scripture being found to give allowance to the, there is as great assurance of the authoritie of the one as of the other; and that is as much to be accounted the word of God, which the scripture warranteth, as that which by name in so many words it expresseth.

Epaph. That is indeede the summe of the answer: to which (if you will) you may adde this, that by preaching

men come to be better assured of the anthozitie of the scripture : for, the better they vnderstand it , the moze comfort they find in it, and the moze they feele the power and working of it, (all which, by the blessing of God are the effects of preaching) the moze are they assured that the scripture is the very thing which it is said to be, even a perfect, pure and sweete doctrine, conuerting the soule, reioycing the heart, and able to make a man wise vnto saluation. It is truly said, that the Scripture standeth not in reading, but in vnderstanding. What shall it auaille men to cary a kind of conceipt of some diuine anthozitie to be in the Scripture, so long as they are ignozant of the myserie of it, and without any appzehe[n]sion or tast of the comfort which is intended in it?

Nymph. I am sory that I am constrained to make you tary so long in this matter, and that so much the rather, because there are many other things yet behind, wherein I am as desirous of your helpe as in these already handled : yet because I haue this good oportunitie, and do find you also so willing to instruct me, I will yet further acquaint

Psal. 119. 7. 8.

Psal. 119. 103.

2. Timoth. 3. 15.

*Non in legendo,
sed in intelligendo*

de Herson. contra

Luc.

Mat. 13. 4.

quaint you with one other allegatiō, which being answered, I shall (I thinke) be well provided, both to satisfie those of my acquaintance which shall perhaps seeke help from me, and also to say something to those who with their quirkes and shewes of reasons, thinke to put downe such plaine men as I am when we come into their companie. I named it to you before (though happely by length of communication it is slipped from you) and it is this, That euen reading it selfe is preaching: and that they seeke to proue by these reasons: first, they say, to preach is nothing but to publish the Gospell, and that is done by reading: secondly, in hearing the scriptures read, we heare the sermons of the Prophets, of Christ, and of his Apostles, which passe all other sermons which any man now can make. Thurdly, there is (they say) euen in reading that which we so much commend preaching for, namely expounding and applying; for the new Testament is the expounder of the old, and the Epistles of Paul and Peter and the rest do apply both vnto mens consciences. Thus, though in our common speech we ac-

4.

count reading to be one thing, and preaching to be another, yet by these deuises we are many times shrewdly puzzled, and know not sodainly what to answer.

Epap. These reasons, what thew soeuer they may make at the first view, yet are they neuer able to proue that for which they are alleaged, as shall (God willing) appeare in the seuerall examination of them. First, for that which is said, that preaching is nothing but a publishing of the Gospell, I peld vnto it, if it be well and rightly vnderstood: and when it is so vnderstood as it ought to be, then it will appeare that the reading of the bare context, cannot properly be termed preaching. I find in the new Testament foure words especially to be vfed, when preaching so farre forth as it is incident to the office of an ordinary Pastor in Gods Church is mentioned.

1. Cor 9. 16. *hai*
gou is m eay m
ia 7 g eay 7 opay.
 Luke 1. 10.
 Luke 9. 50. *di*
a 7 i v 3.
 Act 4. 2. *ay*
7 7 7 7 7 7
7 7 7 7 7 7
7 7 7 7 7 7

The first signifieth, to deliuer good tidings, because the Gospel is, as it was by the Angels to the shepheards, tidings of great ioy to all Gods people. The second & third words signifie, to make manifest, to discouer, to make knowne, to set forth to open view, and so to handle a matter,

as the Prophet was commaunded to
deale with a vision which God had shew-
ed him, namely, to make it paine vpon
Tables, that he which runneth may reade
it. This shall appcare to be true to any
man, that shal take the paines to examin
and duely to ponder those places of the
new Testament, in which these words
are vsed in the Greeke, which being ap-
plied to the Minister his office, are trans-
lated by the word Preach. And these
kinds of words, do fitly set forth the duty
of a Preacher, which is especially that,
which Paul exhorteth the Ephesians to
begge of God on his behalfe, to wit, To
make knowne the secret of the Gospell,
which (seeing it must be sought for as til-
uer, and searched for as for treasure) is not
ordinarily to be looked for in the vpper
face as it were, but to be with paines and
industrie digged out of the very bowels
and heart of the Scripture. The fourth
word signifieth to publish, and as an he-
rald or a crier, to deliuer a matter in open
place, in the hearing of a multitude, that
many may take notice of it. For this cause
the Prophet Isaiah was willed to Crie a-
leude, and to Lift vp his voice like a trum-

Hab. 2. 2.

Rom. 9. 17. *ἡ γὰρ ἡμετέρα
ἐστὶν ἡ χάρις καὶ
ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ
οὗτος ὁ λόγος
ἐστὶν ἡ χάρις καὶ
ἡ δωρεὰ τοῦ Θεοῦ
οὗτος ὁ λόγος*

Eph. 6. 19. *ἵνα
ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς
ἡμεῖς ἡμεῖς*

Prod. 2. 4.

2 Tim. 4. 2. *Κηρύττει τὸν λόγον*

Is. 58. 1.

Ier. 7. 3.

Pro. 8. 3. 4. 5.
11. 9. 4.Iſa. 55. 1.
Mat. 11. 28.What pre-
aching is.

pet; and Jeremiah was commaunded to stand in the gate of the Lords house, and to crie the word there. And hence also it is, that the wisdom of God, is said to stand in the top of the high places, and to make as it were a publike proclamation: O men! ô ye foolish! who so is simple let him come hither. Ho, euery one that thirsteth: come vnto me al ye that are wearie, &c. By this it may appeare what it is to Preach, and in what sense Preaching may be tollerably defined to be a publishing of the Gospell: namely, it is an open and comfortable discouerie by word of mouth, making plaine vnto the people of God, the mysterie of godlinesse, euen the secret of the Gospell. Now, as no man duly considering the nature and vse of the sozenamed words, can denie Preaching (by a Minister lawfully called) to be euen such a kind of publishing the Gospell, as is now set downe: so neither can he with any face or colour affirme, the action of reading the Scripture to be answerable to this description. So that though it be granted, that the text of Scripture is the Gospell, and the very word of God; and withall, that reading is after a sort a pub,

a publishing thereof, because thereby the letter of the Text is recited with a lowd voice, from an eminent and conspicuous place, in the audience of a multitude: yet when we shall enter into a more exact examination of things, it will then appeare, that Reading simply cannot be called a publishing of the Gospell, in that sense, as it is required of Ministers and Teachers to be spreaders abroad and proclaimers of Gods truth. Adde hereto, that that which is the principall thing looked for of a Preacher in the publishing of the word, the bare Reader in the act of Reading, neither can nee doth performe: and that is, the deuinding the word of truth aright: and (to apply Christs words in a case not much vnlike) a giuing to them of the household (which is the Church, 1. Tim. 3. 15.) their portion of meate in season. A Minister, is one to whō the dispensation (or stewardship) is committed in the familie of God: and his office is, out of the store-house of the Scripture, to share out to euery one, that which he shall find by his caring to know the state of his flocke, to be best fitting and agreeing to him. As for as example: Milke (that is, the first

2. Tim. 2. 15.

Luk. 12. 42.

οἰκονομία:
1. Cor. 9. 17.

Pro. 27. 2.

Heb. 5. 12. 13.

Vers. 14.

1. Cor. 3. 2.

2. Tim 2. 25.

1. Cor. 4. 21.

Tit. 1. 12. 13.

Vers. 9. 11.

1. Thef. 5. 14.

2. Tim. 5. 1. 2.

1. Tim. 3. 16. 17.

principles of the word of God) to those which are inexpert in the word of righteousness: Strong meate (that is, doctrine of greater depth) for them, who are able to beare it: Meeknesse of instructing for those which are contrarie minded: a rodde and sharpe rebuke of slow bellies, that they may be found in the faith: Improving (or conuincing) of Gainefayers, that their mouths may be stopped: admonition for them that are vnruly: comfort for the feeble minded: a discret and respectiue framing of exhortation to seuerall ages and degrees, to the Elders, as to fathers, to the younger men as to brethren, to the elder women as to mothers, to the yonger as to sisters. After this sort, euery mans portion must be allotted out vnto him: and this ordering of that prouision, which the Lord (as a carefull householder) hath left for his spirituall familie is committed vnto the Minister. The Scripture I confesse is profitable for these purposes, and able to make the man of God absolute and perfect vnto all the good works of his calling, and it is no wholesome fode, vnles it be deliuered out of that Garner: but yet, vnlesse there be moze perfozmed, the
is

is done by naked reading, to wit, a p^{ro}pounding to the household, the whole store, as it were in grosse, it cannot be but whilst euery one is left to be his own carner, the young ones will be starued, and the riotous and misgouerned surfet themselves, with greedie and vnbelie- ming taking that vnto them, which they are neither fit no^r able to receiue. And this, I thinke, may serue to shew how li- tle reason there is in this first Reason, why reading of Scripture shold deserue the honozable name of Preaching: when as both our common speech, and which is Ag. 46. 15 31.
μαρτυριαν
και κηρυγμα more) the language of the holy Ghost, hath put an apparant difference betwixt them.

Nymph. Indeed I acknowledge that to be true out of my owne experience: for though by priuate Reading the Scripture as also by hearing it read, I haue receiued much comfort: (the memorie of things taught thereby renewed, and the truth of them confirmed) yet I haue often bene quite set, often bene altogether mistaken, and still affraid of my owne iudgement e- uen in plainer places, vntill I haue found the publike exposition giuen by the Mini-

ster to iumpe and accord with my opinion. But what say you to the second reason: namely, that in the Scriptures read, we heare the worthie sermons of Christ, of the Prophets, and of his Apostles: and therefore Reading is Preaching?

2 *Epaph.* I say it is a very weake argument. That the sermons of Christ, the Prophets and Apostles were excellent sermons, and that the summe & abridgement of them is to be found in Scripture, no man goeth about to denie: yet this being granted, will neuer proue a Reader to be a Preacher. For he is not a Preacher, who reciteth publikely things of another mans inditing, but he which deliuereth matters (though not inuented) yet in respect of art and industrie compiled and framed by himself. If it be said, that the sermons of Christ, &c. though they be not of his framing that readeth them, yet being read may turne to the profite of the people, I answer, that the question is not, whether they may be profitable, but whether the reading of them may be called preaching. God forbid any man should denie the publike reading of them to be for the behoufe of
Gods

Gods people, (I hope you haue not forgotten what I told you as my iudgment in this case) but how it may be said, that he which hath read them to the people, hath perfozmed that office of a Minister which we call preaching, neither can I conceiue, neither (as I thinke) is any man able to set downe. Besides, if the word Sermon, shall be precisely vrged, that which was the sermon of Christ, or Jeremiah, or Paul, when they liued, and the same vttered by them, cannot be now being recorded in the Bible, and read out by another, so properly called a Sermon; because in our common speech a Sermon requireth the tongue and voice of him that framed it. And therefore to say (as some do) that Christ or some one of y^e ancient Prophets or Apostles preacheth to vs, when we heare the summe of their sermons read vnto vs, is but a borrowed kind of speech, vsuall amongst scholars. Such as that is, that the bloud of ^{Heb. 11. 24.} Abel speaketh; and that he being dead yet ^{Cap. 11. 4.} speaketh; or which is said of the heauens ^{PSAL. 19. 1. 3.} and firmament, that there is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard; and the like, common in the Scripture.

Againe, let the nature and estate of those which are called the Sermons of the Prophets, of Christ, and his Apostles be a litle considered. First in generall this is to be knowne, that we haue but the brieffe and summe, and as it were the heades of their sermons related in the Scripture: for if al that euery one of these spake publikely by way of teaching had bene witten, we might well say as **S.** John said, touching the Deeds and sayings of our Saviour Christ, the world could not containe the bookes: and therefore (if profite be desired) there must necessarily be some course taken, by which y things abridged, by the penmen of the holy Ghost in their writings, may be enlarged. Secondly, the sermons of Moses, are so interlaced with iudiciall ordinances and ceremoniall rites, appertaining onely to the policie of those times, that for the peoples behoufe, it is more then conuenient, that they should enioy the benefite of an able Minister, who may informe them herin, what things be morall, and what be temporarie, what is the substance of euery ceremoniall shadow, and what the perpetuall and vnchangeable

Ioh. 21. 25.

changeable equitie of euery iudiciall constitution. Thirdly, touching the preachings of the Prophets; though they be full of comfort and abounding with sweet consolation, because the maine scope and drift of them all, is to foreshew the renewing and restoring of the Church by Christ, and though they do also notably make knowne the iust iudgement of God against sinne; yet they are so intermixed with mysticall prophecies, with hidden parables, with historிக்கal narrations, and descriptions of countries, with borrowd speeches, and proprieties of that holy language in which they were deliuered: that, howsoever sometimes a lambe (as the prouerbe is) may find a ford easily to be waded thzough, yet vnlesse there be added the helpe and guidance of some learned Ezra, some Messenger, or Interpreter, as Elihu fitly calleth him, and the same no ordinarie man, but (as the text speaketh) one of a thousand, the people cannot possibly reape that good which God hath intended in the reuealing of those things. Fourthly, for the sermons of our Saviour, as we haue but the very short summe of

Neh. 8.

Iob. 33. 33.

Mat. 4. 17.

Luk. 4. 21.

Act. 4. 1.

Act. 4. 5. 12.

1. King. 18. 44.

many of them (according as I said before) so for those which are reported more largely by the Euangelists, I perswade my selfe there is no man, but (if he will speake the truth, out of his owne conscience) he will confesse, that he learneth more by them when by preaching they are explaned, then when they are onely read vnto him. Fifthly, we haue in the Bible very few copies of the Apostles sermons: those that be, are in the booke of the Acts, and yet many times, this is all which is said of them: they preached in Iesus the resurrection from the dead, they went to and fro preaching the word, preached Christ, preached the things that concerne the kingdom of God, and many the like speeches: all which are like vnto the litle cloud, which the seruant of Elias saw; which though at the first it was but like a mans hand, yet at last it couered the face of heauen: so these being clauses of very few words, yet minister iust matter of many large discourses, & the same also very needfull for the well vnderstanding of them. If it shall be said that the Apostles writings were sermons, I answer, they cannot properly be called their sermons:

mons. Paul writing to the Romaines, saith, that besides this labour of writing, he was readie also to preach the Rom. 1. 15. Gospell vnto them: so that he did not account his writing to be preaching. The Epistles of the Apostles were the summes of that doctrine which they had taught by word of mouth, and according to the tenour whereof, their desire was, that the Ministers of the places to whom they wrote should proceede. I know they were read in the Churches, according as it was made, that a matter written to a Col. 16. whole congregation should be communicated to all in publike: but what then? I doubt not, but the pastors in the severall assemblies. did (as we now do) preach vpon those Epistles, and open and apply them to their auditozies: & so much may easily appeare, as by other places, so especially by that speech to the Hebrewes, by the autho^r of the Epistle written to them: I beseech you also brethren, suffer Heb. 13. 22 the words of exhortation: for I haue written vnto you in few words: which speech Caluin and Junius. (as it is well obserued by two learned interpreters of our later times) the Apostle purposely vsed, lest his writing should

be an occasion to any, of lessening that due estimation, which the ordinarie course of preaching did deserue. It is all one as if the Apostle had said: Brethren, notwithstanding al this which I haue written vnto you, yet I pray you continue your accustomed reuerence to the labours of your owne Ministers: I, as the nature of an Epistle requireth, haue written briefly, therefore you shall still need the assistance of your watchfull and learned Ouerseers, who shall enlarge these points, which I haue drawne as it were into a narrow roome, and by powerfull exhortations apply them either to your comfort or reproofe, as their knowledge in your estate from time to time shall direct them. **This is the meaning of that place, plainly prouing y^e necessitie of ioyning the pains of a preaching Minister, with the writings & Epistles of the Apostles of Christ Iesus. And thus haue you my answer to this second stout reason, why reading shold be preaching, because sozsoth, thereby is communicated to vs the summe and substance of the worthy sermons which Christ, and the Prophets and Apostles haue sozmerly deliuered. The weaknesse**
of

of which reason, I hope this short discourse, hath made you to perceiue.

Nymph. For these two alleaged reasons, you haue indifferently satisfied me. I do now expect, what you wil say, touching the last reason, why reading shold be preaching.

Epaph. The third reason (as I remēber) 3 was, that reading may therefore truly be called preaching, because in our Church the reading of y^e Scripture is so ordered, that first, there is a portion of the old Testament read, next of the new, and thirdly some parcell of y^e Epistles: which they will haue to be called preaching, because as the new Testament is an exposition of the old, so y^e Epistles are the applying of both vnto Gods people. This I think, is the third reason, that you told me of.

Nymph. You haue hit it right, if you can answer it as fully, as you haue rehearsed it truly, then it shall neuer be any occasion of scruple to me hereafter.

Epaph. To make a short answer to a slight reason, this is that I say: It is true, if we compare y^e whole new Testament, with the whole old Testament, that the latter is an exposition of the former, because it maketh knowne vnto vs, that all the an-

1. Cor. 1. 20.
 Heb. 1. 8.
Vetus Testa-
mentum in nouo
revelatum, no-
uum in vetere
velatum. Aug.
 in Psal. 105.

cient promises, touching the Messias, are yea and Amen in Christ Jesus: so that the substance both of old and new is this, Iesus Christ yesterday, and to day, the same also is for ever. And hereupon is that saying of Augustine: The old Testament (saith he) is reuealed in the new, and the new, was as it were lapped and folded up in the old: the same may also be acknowledged touching the Epistles, that in the doctrine both of the old & new Testament is applyed & pressed vpon mens consciences by wholesome exhortations. But what then? though this hold in general, that the new Testament is the Commentarie to the old, and the Epistles, the applyers of both, yet it will scarcely be found to hold in particulars: namely, y such a parcell of y new testament which cometh in order to be read, is an exposition of the special doctrine, and matter of that portion of the old Testament, which was read before it, or that that part of the Epistles, which followeth both, is a direct and expresse brygger of both. So that howsoever when we diuide y Scriptures into these three parts, y old Testament, the history of the Gospell, & the Epistles, it be true,

true, y^e this is the cōmon nature & state of them, that the second part giueth light vnto the first, & the latter raiseth exhortations out of both, yet when we come to single out these parts into senerall portions, we shall not find that precise and exact correspondence, as that the exposition of the same points, shall be said to follow one the other. And this is all which I wil oppose to this third reaso: which though perhaps it may make a shew among those that are of lesse iudgement, yet it can deceiue no man, that hath any ordinarie skill in the state of an argument.

Nymph. This point hath held vs longer then I either wished or imagined: but I was willing, seeing God had giuen this opportunity, to mention as much as I could remember of things which I haue heard spoken touching these points; neither is there now any thing behind, (that I can call to mind) which I may further propound vnto you, concerning this matter.

Epaph. It is no maruell though the examination of this one point, hath spent vs so much time: for this is certaine, that euery short obiection, wil require a large confutation. Now for the matter it selfe,

Athenians.

there may perhaps be some other objections, differing from these in shew, but yet they will all in the end be found to be the same. I remember I haue read of a vain glorious boaster, who hauing but one onely seruant, yet because he would be thought to keepe a great retinue, would call that one seruant by many seuerall names, that men might imagine, he had sundrie seruants: so, men may set new names, and new formes upon these allegations which we haue examined, that so they might affright vs with the name of multitude, but when they are looked into, they will proue the same things, varying in colour and pretence, but agreeing in substance.

Exceptions against the manner of preaching.

Nymph. That I may then reape benefit by your aduice in respect of that which followeth, I said (if you remember) that the exceptions in which I desired to be resolved, were some against Preaching it selfe, some against the manner of it: the exceptions against preaching it selfe, I haue (as memorie wold serue) acquainted you with: there are three things in the manner of your preaching that are much disliked and discommended: the first is, Rudenesse: the second,

second is roughnesse; the third is ouermuch commonnesse. Touching the first, it is said, that you preach vnlearnedly without eloquence, without allegation of Fathers and of other authors, and therefore you are accounted but as a company of English Doctors, which preach vpon the sodaine what cometh in your heads, without study, which causeth your doctrine to be the lesse regarded.

Epaph. Verily for mine owne part I do as much mislike rashnesse in preaching without due preparation, and rudenesse in handling the word of life, as any man. I know he is cursed that doeth the worke of the Lord negligently. And as it is meete for euery man when he entreteth into the house of God, to take heed to his foote; so it is much more requisite for him that must enter as it were into the seate of the Lord, and speake vnto the people in Christs stead, to be very well advised befoze he take the couenant of God in his mouth. And indeed, the bold hardinesse of many now adayes, is greatly to be pitied, who so ordinarily hand ouer head (as we say) step vp into the pulpit, and when they are there,

Jeremy 48. 12.

Ecclesi. 4. 17.

2. Corintl. 5. 20.

Psalme 50. 16.

1. Corinths 9. 26

Proverbs 26. 18

ἡδύομαι ἀλάλι,
 ἡδύομαι τὸ τὰ ὄφ
 ἔσθην.

1. Tim. 4. 2.

2. Tim. 4. 2.

2. Tim. 4. 2.

do little better then beat the aire, & behaue
 themselves many times like the madde
 man of whom Salomon speaketh, who
 casteth firebrands, and arrowes, and mor-
 tall things: and so (as the prouerbe is)
 though they speake much, yet say little, by
 that meanes exposing the neuer-enough
 reuerenced exercise of preaching, vnto
 the reproches & scoffes of euill speakers.
 Besides, for learning, I confesse that it
 is necessarily required in preaching. S.
 Paul sayth, preaching must be discharged
 in all learning. All liberall arts and sci-
 ences are handmaids to Diuinity, and
 doe owe a kind of seruice vnto Gods
 Church. It is said, a Minister must be
 a workeman, rightly deuinding the word
 of truth: now if he want his knife, that
 is, his art and cunning, well he may
 teare and rend it, and violently dismem-
 ber it, but that he should rightly deuide
 it, that is vnpossible. Yet withall, this
 I adde, that if to preach after a popular
 and familiar fashon, with desire to speak
 to the conceipt & capacity of the simplest,
 and to stand most vpon allegation of the
 holy text, very seldome & very sparingly
 mentioning other testimonies, eyther of
 profane

profane or diuine writers: if I say to
preach on this wise be to be termed rude
and vnlearned preaching, truly for mine
owne particular, I had rather acknow-
ledge that fault, then sake to put it from
mee.

*Malit agnoscere
culpā, quam do-
precari. Pic.
Morand.*

Nymph. What is then your opinion tou-
ching humane learning, and the writings
of the auncient Fathers of the Church; are
they not very behouefull for you that are
students and professors of Diuinitie?

Epap. For the study of humane learning,
I wold not haue you conceiue otherwise
of me, but that I hold it very expedient
for him that intendeth the profession of
Diuinity: I am of his mind which wold
haue a scholler like the witty *Box*, which
gathereth hony out of euery flower: and
I willingly yeld to *S. Augutines* conceit.
who copareth the knowledge of humane
sciences & profane authoꝝs, to þe spoiling
of þe Egyptians by þe Israelites. Howbeit
I wold also stil giue my allowāce to these
studies with this cautiō, namely if they
be vsed to prepare the wit & not to detain
it, & keep it too long from grauer studies:
for seeing as the saying is, Learning is
long & our life but short, it must needs be

*Ap̄i agumento a
simili. Hieron.*

*De Doctr. Chr. l. 2.
ca. 14.*

*Si propere in-
genium non detra-
heant Senec.*

*Ar̄s longa vita
breuis.*

a preposterous course, to spend the most and best time in those things which are but as it were circumstances to the principall science. Again, for the Fathers, this I say in few words, I reuerence them, and do a kind of homage to their very names, and I am contented to acknowledge that of them all which was sayd of two of them, to wit, that they are euen the hammers of heretikes, and the eyes of the world. Our later heretikes, as the Antitrinitarians, the Anabaptists, the Quenfeldians, the Libertines, the Papists, haue reuiued the auncient heresies of elder times, against which those holy men euen spent themselves: and it is to be reputed as great a blessing of God, and an argument of his especial care and prouidence for his Church, that their writings are preserved to this day, by which we are y better fitted to grapple with the enemies of Gods truth. And yet in the study of the fathers, there is many times a double error committed: the one is, that men begin the study of Diuinitie with the reading of their woorkes; which course for the most part breedeth both confusion for want of method,

*Ego illos ueneror
& laudis nominibus
semper assurgens
Sen. l. 8. ep. 65*

Augustine was
called hereticor-
um malleus, and
Ambrose Orbi
sottopositi oculi.

thode, and erroꝝ also thꝛough the lacke
of knowledg in the rule and pꝛopoztion
of faith, by which to trie all things, that so
onely that which is good may be kept:
the other erroꝝ is, that many are ouer-
much deuoted to thē, being ready almost
to sweare to any thing which is affir-
med by them; whereas indeed they both
might and did erre in many things, of-
ten altering their iudgements, retra-
cting and repealing many things; see-
ing moze in their grauer yeares, then at
the first they did perceiue. Hierome con-
fesseth that he was of one mind in some
things when he was a youth, and of an-
other when he grew moze in yeares. He
acknowledgeth also that in some things
he played the Rhetorician, and did dis-
course something idly after the manner
of declaimers. Augustine in many things
was led moze by affection then by iudge-
ment, speaking sometimes that when
he was not fully resolued, as touching
purgatoꝝy and pꝛayer foꝝ the dead, out-
of the abundant loue to his mother Mo-
nica; sometimes foꝝbearing to vtter that
which he thought, thꝛough lothnes to in-
cur the offence of some, yea & frankly he

1. Theſſal. 5. 20.

Iurare in verba

Witness Austine
Retractions.

*Rhetorici su-
mus & in morem
declamatorum
passus fuissimus.
Cicero Helioid.*

In Enc. ad Lau.

Ad Julianum

*In ipſis ſanctis
ſcriptis. multo ne-
ſciam plura quā
ſciam. Epist. 119*

*Pictu. Maran. ex
Ezech.*

*Nolo authoritatē
meā ſequari, ut
adipſas tibi a-
liquand. necesse eſſe
credere, quoniam
a me dicitur. Ad
Paulinum.*

acknowledgeth, y his ignorance in ſcrip-
ture was greater then his knowledge.
And Origen was ſo iealous of his owne
iudgement, y he would neuer aduenture
to write any thing till he was lx. yerres
old, neither would he ſuffer thoſe things
which he had taught publikly, to be takē
by notaries, whole intent was to make
them cōmon to the worlde. And therefore
though it be very profitable & expedient
for a Divine to be wel ſtudied in the Fa-
thers, yet it is good to reade their woꝝkes
aſthe woꝝkes of me. It was a good aduice
which Auguſtin gaue to a friend of his; I
would not (ſaith he) haue thee follow my
authorizty, as though you ſhould thinke
your ſelf bound to beleue whatſoeuer I
ſay, becauſe I ſay it. It is wiſedome to
hold that rule in the peruſing of them al.
But I ſorget my ſelfe, to enter into this
diſcourſe to you, whom it doth not ſo pro-
pely concerne. Howſoeuer, by this that
I haue now ſaid, you may vnderſtand
my opinion touching both the Fathers &
other (as you call it) prophaner learning.

Nym. But I pray you ſir, why may not the
reſtimonies and writings of men be as law-
fully vſed in the actiō of preaching, as in the
priuate preparation for it?

Epp.

Epp. It is no good consequence, to say that they may be alleaged in the pulpit, because they may be perused in the study. When as Salomon made preparatiō for the building of y^e temple, he had 80000. 1. Kings 5. 15. Maſons in the mountaines; and among ſo many, there could not chuſe but be much hewing & knocking, and hammering, yet there was neither hammer, nor axe, nor any toole of iro heard in the houſe while it was in building. 1. Kings 6. 7. After the ſame maner it is in Gods ſpiritual building: thoſe things may lawfully be uſed in the making p^{ro}uiſiō for it, which are not of the like neceſſitie or lawfulnes in the actuall perſormance of it. But to ſpeak more directly, (becauſe theſe ſimilitudes ſerue more to giue light then ſtrength to a matter) if you be deſirous to know a reaſon why we ought to be very ſparing in the uſe of mens teſtimonies in our ordinary ſermons, this is (as I think) y^e p^{ri}ncipal, namely, that our 1. Corinth. 2. 5. faith ſhould not be in the wiſdome of men, but in the power of God: that is to ſay, y^e our iudgmēt in matters of religiō might be grouded not vpon y^e opinions & verdicts of mē, but vpon y^e certain & vndouted truth of God: what is it to y^e cōſciēce of y^e hearer

¶ this is such a mans opinion, or saying of such a Doctoꝝ, it being so wel knowne that they might erre: Surely the conscience can neuer find sure footing untill it cometh to y^e scripture. It is a good speech of Chrysostome, If any thing (sayth he) be spoken without scripture, the knowledge of the hearers halteth: his meaning is, that the iudgement is neuer firme till scripture hath resolved it. It is of no force (saith Augustine) to tell the people, **This I say, and this such a one sayth:** onely this, thus saith the Lord, that striketh the stroke, and doth either conuince or confirme the hearers conscience, it maketh him either to agree to it, or not to be able to say against it.

Nym. Do you then thinke that it is not at all lawfull for a Preacher in a sermon to alleage the Fathers, or to insert the sayings of heathen Poets, Oratoꝝ, Philosophers, and suchlike?

Epaph. I do not say that it is absolutely unlawfull to alleage a sentence out of an auncient wyter, or out of a Heathen authoꝝ: so besides that many graue, godly, and well learned men do sometimes so; there may be as I thinke some
at

*Si quid dicatur
in ista scriptura
aut alio cogni-
tione indicat. In
Psal. 86.*

*No valet, hoc ego
dico, hac tu dicis,
hac ille dicit, sed
hac dicit Domi-
nus. Ad 1. Tim. 2.*

(at least) tolerable causes to allage the. As for example; the Papists ordinarily giue out (& it is common in the mouthes of our subuerted Proselytes) that the ancient Fathers of the Church are all on their side. For this cause, sometimes in some speciall points of difference betwixt them and vs, I take it not to be disallowable, if the Preacher for the taking away of that scruple out of y^e minds of m^e, do shew y^e consent of the elder writers, that men may see it is but a vaine brag which our aduersaries make when they say that their religion is sutable to the iudgement of the auncient Church: yet withall, I would not haue a man make this ordinary. And besides, I hold it fit for him to admonish the people that it is done, not to derogate from the sufficiency of the Scripture, neither to tie them to the opinions of men, but onely to remoue that doubt which by the whispering of wandring Papists may arise in the minds of those that are not so well settled in Religion. So likewise, for the speeches and sentences of prophane authors, to bar them vtterly out of sermons, I dare not, because I find them

AS 17.28.

■ Corint 15 33

TICKET 1.12.

Prudencier & So-
brin, Lunel.

Pennis setacea
var. *minor* Thun-
berg. Hist. tab. 6.
B.

5. 12. 21

bled by that worthy Paul threē severall times; yet this I say, y^e as Pauls example warranteth, so it limiteth the vse of such testimonies, and sheweth that it must be done wisely and soberly, & that vpon two occasions chiefly: the one is to conuince Atheists and irreligious persons, which esteeme not the scripture, that they may be diuē to say, We are pierced with our owne quils, & by that meanes may be either conuerted or silenced. Another occasion is, by some either actions or speeches of theirs to shame those that professe themselves Christians. I remember how God threatneth to prouoke the people of Israel with a foolish nation: according as many times the Prophets to refoyme the backwardnesse and slacknesse of the Iewes, preach to them of the forwardnes and zeale that shal be in the Gentiles after their conuersion. The same kind of reasoning no doubt a Preacher may sometimes profitably vse, by the morally good precepts and actions of the Heathen to checke the carelesnes of men professing Christianity. Thus, now & then I hold a man may tolerably alleage a sentence of a profane writer, & a speech of a heathen

heathē authoꝝ. As foꝝ the strange maner
of preaching which is in vse in many pla-
ces, both in the vniuersities & elsewhere,
there is no man well affected, but if he
knoweth it, he doeth exceedingly pitie it.
One, as though the pulpit were but as a
scaffold, in which he like a master of De-
fence were to play his prizes, and to giue
testimony of his wit, playeth vpon eue-
ry word, and descanteth vpon euery let-
ter in his text, & as though the scripture
were but a rattle foꝝ childꝝen and foles
to make sport withal, he tosseth it hither
and thither, & will not faile to offer it any
violence, to frame it to an imagined con-
ceit, & to draw it to an idle purpose. Ano-
ther, as if his purpose were onely to a-
maze the vulgar, & to affright & astonish
the multitude, mounteth aloft, & is all in
his great words, & new coyned phrases,
moze fit foꝝ some Dimick oꝝ Tragedian,
then a Minister of the Gospel. A third, to
gaine the opiniō of a profound man, that
looketh into matters of moze depth then y
common sozt, rubbeth ouer the vnsauoꝝy
writings of some moth-eaten frier, & by
an vnconth fashon of teaching, together
with a multitude of allegoꝝies & intricate

*Tanquā Arbo-
ra Crepusculum*

*Sanguis pipul-
tor.
Proicit ampullam
& scissipedalio-
verba.*

distinctions, mazeth both himselſe and all thoſe whoſe vnhappy chance it is to be his hearers. A fourth, to be reputed a good linguist and a man of great reading, Suffeth his ſermon with a legion of allegations, and enterlaceth it with many ſhreddings of Latine and Greeke, and by that meanes, though his doctrine perhaps may be profitable, yet he confoundeth the memoꝝy of the diligent and attentive hearer. Thus while men being ſicke of the Pharisaicall diſeaſe, I.oue the praiſe of men more then the praiſe of God, and prefer the oſtentation of their owne ſuppoſed learning befoze the edification of Gods Church, the people is brought either into ſuch an amazedneſſe, as they thinke that any thing may be made of the ſcripture, or to ſuch an vnſetledneſſe in iudgment, as that they do rather hunt after variety of teachers foꝝ their ſtrange maner of preaching, then ſeake foꝝ ſound inſtruction foꝝ their owne better edifying. Thus haue you my iudgement touching the vſe of humane testimonies in the exerciſe of preaching.

Nymphas. I willingly agree vnto you in that which you haue ſaid touching ſome
mens

mens course of preaching: I haue sometimes my selfe bene at some mens sermons which haue had the name of great Clarkes and learned men, and yet (it may be mine owne dulnesse was the cause) such hath bin their maner of handling, so full of schoole-points and termes, and sayings of men, that neither hath my iudgement bene bettred, nor my conscience any whit comforted thereby. But I do not yet see how you will make the parts of your owne speech to agree: you say preaching must be learned and eloquent, and yet you are strait in allowing the vse of those things which may testifie learning, and garnish and set forth your sermons: for I tel you, in the countrey here you are not thought learned, nor yet eloquent, so long as you speake nought but English, and withall common and ordinarie words, and alleage nothing but places of scripture, which euery man can fetch out of the Bible as well as you. I pray you therfore recõcile these two, how there shall be that plainnesse in your sermons, and yet learning too.

Ep. The matter is not what men think, but what men ought to think. It is possible so; a man to be skilful in þe tongues,

*How a sermon
may be plaine
& yet learned.*

Mathew 28. 19.

and yet to be farre from a learned man : and much reading, though it argueth industry, & may be a witnesse of a good memory, yet it is no certaine argument of sound iudgment. That man is most learned, who by his skill can make another man learned : for this is the end of preaching, to make men schollers : and he is most eloquent, that can make him who heareth him, vnderstand y^e which he him selfe conceiueth. The intent of learning, is not y^e men which haue it should thereby breed astonishment in their hearers, & gain admiration to themselves, but that by it they should be profitable & helpful to those which are without it. So likewise, the vse of eloquence is not to be as it were a mist before a mans speeches, to cause him to be the more hardly vnderstood, but to giue lustre (as I may so speake) thereto, & to bring both light & delight to the dull apprehension of the hearers. And therefore whosoener so preacheth, as that because of the depth of his learning (as men call it) he passeth the capacity of the meanest hearer : again, whosoener so speaketh, as that his eloquence (as men terme it) maketh him to be as it were an alien to his

ordinary audience, surely the same is neither truly learned, nor truly eloquent, because his learning not conceived profiteth not, & his eloquence not understood benefits not. So that this being considered, that he is most learned whose preaching is most profitable; and he most eloquent, whose manner of speaking best entrencheth into every ordinary conceit: it is an easie matter to reconcile these two, that our preaching must be learned, yet familiar; eloquent, and yet so plaine, that it may be truly said of it, that if it be hid, it is hid to them that are lost. 2. Cor. 4 3.

Nymp. Yet it will be thought that preaching will grow into very great contempt, and seeme but base in the eyes of wise men, if choise speaking & quaint words, which in other discourses are thought very commendable, shall be banished from your sermons.

Ep. Why man, did you neuer heare of this phrase, the foolishnes of Preaching? When the Gospel was first preached in y^e world, the reason why it had so cold entertaynement was this: The Jewes they wold either haue it confirmed by some extraordinary signes, or els they wold not credit it: 1. Cor. 1 21.

(The Iewes require a signe:) **The Gentiles** being men of great learning, as appeareth, they seeing Paul and the rest coming after a very meane fashion, men for their personage silly, for their profession, making shew to know nothing but one Christ, & the same crucified, and for their course and carriage in the ministry, plaine, auoyding purposely the enticing words of mans wisdom, they by & by scorned it, and deemed it folly to be carried away by a thing of that simplicity: (The Grecians seeke after wisdom): hereupon this Epithete was cast by the reprochful world upon the best kind of preaching, to call it foolishnes, and al for this one cause, because as for the substance of it, it is crossing to mans reason, so for the fashion of it, according to the world, it is cleane out of fashion, onely beautifull in this, because it is not beautified with that, without which the nice and giddy world thinketh euery thing to be deformed. So that the opinion of men reputing it to be but foolishnesse, because it wanteth that garish garnishing which mens itching eares are much delighted with, ought to be no disparagement to it in the sight of

of those that are truly religious: and I pray God give vs all grace that are called to the Ministerie, to be so set for the glorie of God in the conuersion of soules, that we may more affect soundnesse of teaching, then finenesse of speech, and may thinke it our best art to secret art, & to take heed of that bastard eloquence, w^{ch} this worst age of the world, seeketh to make legitimate. It is is a good aduice of Jerome, to auoid a pompons kind of speaking in theologicall discourses: for a man (saith he) that hanoleth holy matters, a low and (as it were) a feate oration is necessarie, and not such as is thickned with artificiall framing of words. It is no matter, though the Papists continue to call vs in scoyne Inke Diuines, because of our close adhering to the holy text, so long as the soules of Gods seruants shall receiue comfort by vs: for then I am right sure, this being sought for, the little flocke shall pray for vs, and the great shepheard shall be good to vs.

Nym. You haue (at least to my vnderstanding) well remoued this imputation of rude vnlearnednesse: I pray you therefore come to the next, which is that your maner

*Non ornamenta,
sed documenta.
Aug. de doctr.
Christi lib. 4. c. 19
Magna est ars
celare artem.
Procellatam ora-
tionem in theo-
logica tractatio-
nibus de rebus
per se tractatis
pedestru oratio
necessaria est,
non quia verborum
compositione
frondeat.
ad Damasum.
Atramentales
Theolog. Eckius.*

preaching is too austere: you haue nothing in your mouths but hell, and condemnation, and the iudgements of God, which (as some say) is the next way to bring men vnto despaire.

2. Tim. 3. 24.

Luk. 9. 54. 55.

Isa. 42. 3.

Math. 15. 26.

Epap. I confesse indeed, that there is a great error committed by some, whose zeale doth sometimes so farre ouer carrie them, that they forget the Apostles rule, of suffering the euill men patiently: and it may not vnfitly be said to many such, as Christ said to his disciples, when they would needes haue had leaue to commaund fire to come downe from heauen, to consume them which would not receiue him; they know not of what spirit they are. Yet notwithstanding, the conceipt of the most, who wold haue nothing but peace preached to them, when as it may be truly said to them as Iehu said to the seruant of Jehoazam, what haue they to do with peace? is not at any hand to be giuen way vnto. It is meet so; a Preacher to take heed, that he breake not the bruiſed reed, nor quench the smoaking flaxe: so it is meete also to beware, how he taketh the childrens bread and cast it to whelpes. The course warranted to vs by
the

the Scripture is this: first, to endeavour the softening of our hearers hearts by bringing them to the sight and sense of their owne wretchednesse, befoze we adventure to apply the riches of Gods mercie in Christ Jesus. The preaching of the Gospell is compared by our Sauioz himselfe vnto the sowing of seed: as therfoze Math. 13. the ground is first tozne vp with the plough, befoze the seede be committed to it: so the fallow ground of our harts must Ier. 4. 4 first be broken vp with the sharpnesse of the law, and the very terror of the Lord, 2. Cor. 3. 10 befoze we can be fit to entertaine the sweet seede of the Gospell. They who desire as liuely stones to be made a spirituall house, euen the habitation of God by the spirit, must yeld themselves to be squared and hewne, and smothered by the well applying of the law: that so they may become fit to be coupled together with the 1. Pet. 2. 5. rest of the building, and to grow vnto an Ephes. 2. 22 holy temple in the Lord. We must haue our mouths stopped by the law, and in Rom. 3. 19 our owne feeling, stand culpable before God, and euen as it were concluded vnder sinne, befoze we can be admitted to Gal. 3. 23. thinke our selues to haue any the least

Luk. 2. 14.

Mat. 7. 6.

Prov. 27. 7.

Eph. 3. 18.

As. 7. 51.

Prov. 26. 1.
Vest. 3.

Psal. 32. 9.

Pro. 1. 22.

Pro. 14. 9.

Matth. 5. 6.

Isa. 50. 4.

Pro. 25. 25.

interest in the glad tidings of the Gospell. To preach mercie and grace vnto them, which feele no need of mercie, and know not the worth of grace is no better then to cast pearles before swine, and to expose the louing kindnesse of God vnto contempt. The person that is full despiseth an hony combe, saith Salomon; and what doth a proud Pharsæ, or a churlish Nabal, or a scoffing Ismael, or a politique Gallio, care to heare of the breadth, and length, & depth, & height of the loue of God in his son Iesus? The doctrine of that nature, is as vnfitting such vncircumcised eares, as the snow the sommer, and the raine the harvest. Vnto the horse belongeth a whip, to the asse a bridle, & a rod to the fools back. So long as mē wil be like an horse, and a Mule which vnderstandeth not, and manifest their folly by hating knowledge, and by making a mocke of sinne, what other thing should they haue, but that which of right belongeth to them? Let the soule be once humbled, & brought to hunger and thirst after righteousness, & then a word in season, wil be as the cold waters to a wearie traoueller, & as good newes from a farre countrie; then will mercie be as welcome
as

as the raine vpon the mowne grasse, & as Psal. 72. 8.
the showers that water the earth. Besides
we find it true by common experience, y
the greatest part are so dead in sin, y if a
Preacher should deale after some such
mild fashion, as old Eli dealt with his 1. Sam. 2. 12.
sons, his sermō will be but like a dreame
when one awaketh: the hearer happily
when he is gone will think he heard som-
thing, but he knoweth not what, and be-
cause he was reproued but softly, he wil
imagine that he sinned but sleightly, & so
wil let al slip as easily as it came gently.
So y a man y intendeth to do any good in
this frozen generation, he had need to be
rather Boanerges, one of the sons of thun- Mar. 2. 17.
der, then Bar-Ionah, the son of a doue. Mat. 10. 17.
In the Prophet Jeremy we read, that y word Ier. 23. 29.
of the Lord is like an hammer: now if you
adde that to it w Salomon saith, that the Eccle. 12. 11.
words of the wise, are like nailes it wil fol-
low thence, y he which is a wise maister-
builder in y Lords house, and a workman
that needeth not to be ashamed, when he 2. Tim. 2. 15.
handleth this same hammer of the word,
he will be sure to dꝛiue the nails of his ex-
hortations to the head, that they may
leauē some impression in the hearts of

those which heare him . Well then, this is the substance of my opinion in this point: I would haue a preacher to preach peace, and to ayme at nothing moze, then the comfort of the soules of Gods people, yet I would haue him withall frame his course to the manner of Gods appearing to Elijah: The text saith, that first a mightie strong wind rent the mountaines, and brake the rockes: then, after that came an earthquake, and after the earthquake came fire: and after all these, then came a still and a soft voice. After the same manner, I would not haue the still and mild boice of the Gospell come, till the strong tempest of the law, hath rent y^e stony harts of men, & hath made their bellies to tremble, and rottennesse to enter into their bones, and to cry with that god king Hezekiah: O Lord it hath oppressed me, comfort me: or at the least, because our auditories are mixt, consisting of men of diuers humors, it shall be good for him to deliuer his doctrine with that caution, that neither the humbled soules may be affrighted with the severity of Gods iudgements, nor the profane and unpentant, grow presumptuous by the aboun-

1. Kie. 19. 11. 12.

Nab. 3. 16.

Isa. 38. 14.

abundance of Gods mercie.

Nymp. Indeed I am verily perswaded, that this course which you haue named is the best: for to this best agree those properties of the word which the Apostle makes Heb. 4. 12. mention of: to wit, *Sharpnesse and entering through, to the diuiding asunder of the soule and the spirit, and discerning of the thoughts and intents of the heart.* But yet in the world this is a course that men like not of.

Epaph. No maruell: for (as I haue in part told you before in the beginning of our Conference) it is the greatest enemy vnto that which men loue best, and that is their owne sinne: vntill God be pleased to put a new spirit within mens bowels, Ezec. 11. 19. and to take the stonie heart out of their bodies, there is nothing that they do hate more, then to be reformed. But the truth Psal. 50. 17. is, that though no rep^{ro}ose for the present seemeth to be ioyous but grieuous, yet at Heb. 12. 17. the length, when men are better aduised, he that rebuketh shall find more fauor, then Pro. 18. 23. he which flattereth with his lips. *Dea,* and the time will come, that those who can not suffer wholesome doctrine, will curse 1. Tim. 4. 2. the day, that euer they knew, or heard those sweet-tongued chaplaines, and so

Jer. 23. 31.
1. King. 22.
Ezec. 11. 18.
Jer. 23. 32.

Act. 26. 16

thing Zidkijahs, which haue sowed pillows vnder their armeholes, and haue caused them to erre by their flatteries: and they wil also erie shame vpon those, who they now thinke too cholericke & censorious, y they did not speake more thoroughly vnto them: therfore whatsoeuer mens acceptance is, it is best for vs to order the matter so, by speaking directly to the reproofe of sin, y we may be pure from the blood of all men; and that no man who liueth vnder our ministry may haue cause in y day of the Lord to impute his slownes in repenting, to our too cold, too mild, and conert maner of reproofing.

Nymph. But what say you now, sir, to the third accusation: which is, that you make your preaching too common, and so by that means draw it into contempt, & make it to be the lesse esteemed among men? I can tell you there be many that are preachers themselves be of that opinion.

Epiph. I am the more sozie: and to tell you what I thinke plainly, I am of that mind, that those which blame often preaching as a fault, what colour soeuer they may set vpon it, yet they do it chiefly for the couering of their owne shame, y their negli-

negligence may not be taken notice of. I remember the old fable of the Fore, who hauing had a mischance & lost his taile, coming into the assembly of the beasts of the same kind, fell to perswade them every one to cut off his taile, pleading the cumbersomnesse and waightinesse of it, with many the like circumstances: but the matter coming to further scanning, it was found, that the wily fore did it onely to couer his owne deformitie, which (if to be without tailes had once bene a fashion) should neuer haue bene espied. I leaue you to apply it. Only I wold wish all such so minded, to follow Hieromes counsell, in which he admonisheth one Calphurnius, vpon some such occasiō as this, that if he wanted teth himselfe, he should not be enuious against those who were able to cate. When one counselled Moses to silence Eldad & Medad, imagining that their Prophecying in the hoast, might haue eclipsed Moses his credite, Moses liked not the aduice, but wished that all the Lords people were Prophets. But lest I should seeme too tart against this kind of mē, of whō yet there is some hope, I wil be cōtent to examin their reasons, because (as I gather by your speech)

*Ne vestimentis
dentibus, edens
calus inuideat
Epist. 84.*

*Num. 11. 27.
28. 29.*

tellencie of it. The Sun, the water, the fire, what things moze common, and yet what things lesse despised? and y reason is, because we all know, we cannot live without them. Let men be once perswaded of this, that neither the Sunne, noz water, noz fire are moze necessary for the outward man, then preaching is for the soule and spirit, and that where it is wanting, there the people decay, the they will neuer be cloyed: or at least, if satietie through the in-bred corruption of our nature crepe vpon them, by the remembrance hereof it will quickly be recovered. Thirdly, do but marke, what course of preaching it is, which pleaseth some to call ouer-common: namely, a settled course for euery Sabbath, and it may be some weeke day Lecture, as it is called vsually. Now I would faine see, how any man can say with reason, that this is ouer often. Dauid commaundeth to preach in season. If this charge carie any waight, what better season can there be, then the Sabbath, a day of leisure, a day in which men, if not for conscience, yet for custome and because of the lawes assemble themselves in one place,

Pro. 19. 18.

1 Tim 4. 1.

place, for the performance of one common dutie and seruice vnto God? I remember, it is permitted as a circumstance to the historicall relation of some of Christs sermons, that when he saw the multitude, and great troupes resorted to him, then he spake many things to them: and in another place it is said, that beholding the swarmes of people, and considering their spirituall wants, euen his very bowels did worke within him, and he began to teach them. *Mat. 9. 11. 13.*
Mat. 9. 13.
So no doubt it is, & ought to be with euery good Minister: he cannot (as we say) find in his heart, to dismisse a multitude assembled to worship God, without some word of exhortation. He thinketh, that when a Pastor of a parish is comen into the church vpon the Sabbath day, & beholdeth his whole flocke gathered together as one man, he should euen imagine, y^e the very presence of the people doth cal to him, (as y^e Rulers of the synagogue did to Paul and Barnabas) y^e if he haue any word of exhortation for them, he should say on. So that if to preach in season, be a Ministers his dutie; and the fulnesse of an assembly vpon y^e sabboth be a seasonable occasiō, as
Mat. 6. 14.
Act. 13. 15.

Contradict in
faint.

they seeke (as the Proverbe is) to be
made with reason.

Num. 11. 6.

They say, the ouercommonnesse of
preaching, will breed contempt of prea-
ching. First of all, suppose it fareth with
some, in respect of preaching, as it did
with the vnthankfull Israelites, which
loathed the Hanna, wherewith the Lord
so miraculously fed them in the wilder-
nesse, so they also seeme to be (as it were)
glutted, with the continuall vse of the
word preached: yet this can be no reason
why a diligent and frequent Preacher
should remit any thing of his former in-
dustrie, and speak more sparingly, draw-
ing his Sermons into a smaller number,
then he was wont. It is truly said, that
there are three very good mothers, which
haue three very bad daughters, and they
are these: 1. Truth, which yet in y^e world
breedeth hatred. 2. Peace, a great bles-
sing of God, and yet through our corrup-
tion it causeth Idlenesse. 3. Familiarity,
and the comon vse of a good thing, which
is notwithstanding mostly recompen-
ced with Contempt. And yet this is not
in the nature of these things, but onely
in our corruption. For as the nature of
God

God is so perfectly good, that he doth turn
 even very euill things, into very good
 things: (as he made the malice of the
 Jewes, in putting his Sonne to death,
 to be a meane of our saluation) so our na-
 ture is so absolutely euill, that it turneth
 very good things into euill: as sometimes
 the grace of God into wantonnesse, and
 Christian libertie into an occasion vnto
 the flesh, & so in these particulars which
 I haue named. Now because truth is ge-
 nerally hated, shall men therefore banish
 it from their speeches, and frame their
 tounge to flatterie? Because many abuse
 the blessing of peace, shall we therefore
 voluntarily raise tumults, or desire God
 to put an end to our happie dayes of qui-
 etnesse? There is in the world no reason
 for it: Neither is there any iust cause, why
 we should go about to make our preach-
 ing, as it were, something moze dainty,
 because it may seeme to some raw and ill
 disposed stomackes, to breed a kind of
 fulnesse and satietie. Secondly, if we
 looke better into it, we shall see, that the
 true cause of mens contempt of prea-
 ching, is not so much the common vse of
 it, as the ignorance of the worth and ex-

Ind. 4.
 Gal. 5. 13

cellencie of it. The Sun, the water, the fire, what things moze common, and yet what things lesse despised? and y reason is, because we all know, we cannot liue without them. Let men be once perswaded of this, that neither the Sunne, noz water, noz fire are moze necessary for the outward man, then preaching is for the soule and spirit. and that where it is wanting, there the people decay, thē they will neuer be cloyed: or at least, if satietie through the in-bred corruption of our nature crepe vpon them, by the remembrance hereof it will quickly be recouered. Thirdly, do but marke, what course of preaching it is, which pleaseeth some to call ouer-common: namely, a settled course for euery Sabbath, and it may be some worke day Lecture, as it is called usually. Now I would faine see, how any man can say with reason, that this is ouer often. Dauid commaundeth to preach in season. If this charge carie any waight, what better season can there be, then the Sabbath, a day of leisure, a day in which men, if not for conscience, yet for custome and because of the lawes assemble themselves in one place,

Pro. 1. 18.

1 Tim. 4. 1.

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Isa. 58. 13.

2. Tim. 4. 2.
Mark. 2. 27.

Preaching the
principall ex-
ercise of the
Sabboth.

no man can deny it) I cannot see how: so
seasonable an exercise, can be charged
with ouer-commonnesse, or blamed as a
meanes to make the word of God lesse
pzeious amongst men. God requireth,
that we should call the Sabbath a delight
to consecrate it: now, how can that day
be hallowed and consecrated as it ought,
if so speciall a part of Gods spirituall
worship, as preaching is, be left out: how
must not the whole other seruice of the
day, be euen as a lame and maymed sa-
crifice befoze God? I know indeed it plea-
seth some to say, that the meeting of
the people together to the hearing of the
word preached (a phrase scoffed at, as
though it were not the language of the
Scripture) is not the chiefe institution of
the Lords day. But whatsoeuer mens
idle conceits be, yet the truth is, that the
most excellent part of Gods seruice, con-
sisteth in the exercise of his word: the
faithfull dispensing whereof is the beau-
tie of the Lords house, and the very life
of the Sabbath. The other parts of Gods
publike worship, do but as it were waite
and giue attendance vpon this. For,
wherefoze is prayer, but to prepare vs to
the

the word, and to begge of God to bestow those blessings which are promised in the word: And if we will credite the Scripture, men cannot pray till by preaching they are taught to pray. How shall they Rom. 10. 14 call on him, vpon whom they haue not beleueed, &c. The place is knowne well enough. Againc, what is the vse of the Sacraments, but to be seales to the word: The preaching of the word is the tenor of the couenant betwixt God and vs: the Sacraments are seales, to assure vs of the perfozmance of the gracious promises, made vnto vs in the word. So that indeed the other specialties of Gods worship, are of no vse, but onely so far forth as they haue reference to the word. In the second of Isaiah his prophetic, where the state of the Church of the Gospell is described, the people are brought in, prouoking one another to ascend vp Isa. 23. to the mountaine of the Lord, to the house of the God of Iacob: to encourage themselves and other hereunto, they vse this reason, he will teach vs his wayes: no doubt in their meetings they were to vse both prayer and the Sacraments. But yet, that there they shold be taught, was

1 Sam. 15. 22.

used as the principall motive; because, as to be taught the wayes of the Lord, is the principall blessing, so obediently to heare is the principall service. Wherein hath the Lord so great pleasure, as in this, when his voyce is obeyed; and how can his voyce be obeyed till it is known, and what other ordinarie meanes of knowledge shall we trust vnto besides preaching? Seeing then the Sabbath day is a fit time in regard of peoples assembling together, and seeing also the preaching and hearing of the word, is a main part of the worship of God, and by consequence especially intended in the first institution of the Sabbath, he that indureth to entertaine his people euery Lords day, with the opening and applying the Scriptures, cannot iustly be accused to be one, who by too much familiarity draweth the ordinance of God into contempt.

Nymph. Well, suppose it be yeelded vnto, that it be good to continue the exercise of Preaching euery Sabbath day, yet it may seeme superfluous to draw the people to hearing vpon the weeke dayes, when men are otherwise in their worldly affaires to be employed.

Epaph.

Epaph. That is it which I was now
next about to speake of: I cannot say it is
a matter of necessity for a Minister to ty
himselfe or his auditors to a wake-day
sermō: yet if a Preacher be willing so to
bestow his paines, and the people, in re-
spect of their dwelling together, as in ci-
ties and greater townes, be ready to re-
deeme some time for so good a purpose, I
hold it very commendable. When Paul
and Barnabas preached at Antioch, we
reade that the Gentiles besought them
that they would preach those words to
them, in the space betwixt that and the
Sabbaoth day. Now though I will not
say that that example is a law, yet I
must needs say it is an allowance to such
a course: and that which was commen-
dable in them, cannot deserue blame in
others of Gods childre, who are willing
to diuert some of their time allowed for
outward busineses to spirituall occasi-
ons, as namely for the increasing of their
knowledge, and for the edifying them-
selues in their most holy faith. Neither can
such a course be more an occasion of brin-
ging preaching into contempt, then the
established order for meeting on wednes-

Ephes 5. 16.

Acts 13. 43.
ACTS 13. 43.
ACTS 13. 43.

Iude 20.

dayes and fridaies to pꝛaier & reading of the scriptures, can be oꝛ is an occasion to make these good exercises to be despised.

Isa. 55. 10.

Nymph. I haue heard some say, that it is sound and learned preaching which we that are the people must wish for, and not often and continuall preaching: and that the word of God is compared to raine, which though it be in measure profitable, yet in abundance maketh *the seede rotten under the clouds.* In like maner they say that preaching in moderation may do much good, but if it exceed, may be an occasion of barrennesse among the hearers.

2. Corin. 13. 8.

Epaph. It is a wofull thing, that men should so far stretch their wits to deceiue their own soules, & to beguile others also. I would we had all learned the Apostles rule, not to do any thing against the truth, but for the truth. To satisfie you touching this y^e you haue named, hauing obserued it (as you say) out of the speeches of some: it is worthy the marking, how Satan in his subtilty vnder the coloꝛ of allowing & vꝛging sound preaching, would ouerthrow diligent preaching; therein building vpon a false ground, namely, that a man cannot preach often & preach soundly
to:

to: which how false it is, & vnreprouable labours of many industrious ministers in this land, are a sufficient witnes. It is a wise & holg speech of Salomon, & may be wel applyed to this purpose, A slouthfull hand maketh poore, but the hand of the diligent maketh rich: and againe, There is that scattereth & is more increased, but he that spareth more the is right, surely cometh to pouerty. Men of excellent gifts many times, whilest either in nicenesse fearing to hurt their bodies, or in pride, being as it were vnwilling to make theselues too common, they are more sparing in this exercise of preaching (which is the glory of a Minister) through the iust iudgment of God lose their former perfection, & as through disuse they grow lesse willing, getting a kind of habite of negligence, so also they become lesse able to do good in the Church of God then they were before. Now when preaching (through default of oft inuring theselues vnto it) becometh more irksom, they being to seek in many things when they shal to make preparatiō for it, then strait because of their owne vnaptnes (& iust punishment of idleness) they conclude, & those who preach so oft

Prouerbs. 10. 4.

Chap. 11. 14.

1 Corinth. 9. 16

Phil. 1. 8

1 Thess. 2. 8

1 Cor. 4. 3

(as they call it) preach carelesly without study and without learning. On the other side, men (it may be) of meaner (yet commendable) gifts, who remembering the necessitie which is layed vpon them, and the woe which shall follow, if they preach not the Gospell, do euen deuote themselves and all their studies and endeouours to the service of the church, and do so long after their people from the very heart roote in Iesus Christ, that for their spiritual furtherance they could beteame to deale euen their owne soules vnto the: such I say, through the blessing of God vpon their holy labours, do so increase in iudgement and in zeale, and haue such a doore of vterance opened vnto them, to speake the mysterie of Christ, that as they themselves placing a kind of felicity in the doing of their dutie, find in themselves a certain facultie in that heauenly exercise, so the Church of God committed to them, is instructed by their soundnesse of doctrine, and whetted on by their zealous exhortations. So that to say, that sound preaching is for the peoples behoofe, and not frequent preaching, is a mere collusion, presupposing that which
is

is most false, namely, that soundnes of doctrine and oftenesse of teaching cannot go together. How little I approue of rash aduenturing vpon this kind of exercise, that which I haue spoken formerly may witnesse: and how small reason there is to separate these two, profitable preaching and often preaching, I referre it to any indifferent iudgement.

Nymph. But because some that are reputed learned, affirme that often preaching is not so much for the peoples profite; shew me I pray you some good reason to the contrary, that I may be able both to preuaile against mine owne backwardnes when I beginne to grow weary of diligent hearing, and to prouoke others also, when I shal behold them as it were glutted with multitude of sermons.

Epaphr. There is a certaine disease which we are all more or lesse infected with: our Sauio^r Christ calleth it slownes of heart: this euill sicknesse being accompanied with a kind of spirituall sloppinesse and lethargie, maketh vs as it were a very lump of sluggishnesse, slow in attention, slow in vnderstanding, slow in rememb^ring, slow in practising.

Luke 24. 45.
The necessity of
often preaching

Psalme. 115. 6.

Iob 33. 14.

Iob 42. 5.

Ezechiel 3. 27.

1. Corint. 14. 11

2. Corint. 1. 14

First for attentio, we see it by every days experience, how like the most of our hearers are vnto the idols of the heathen, of whom the Psalme saith, y they haue eares and heare not. It is true that Elihu sayd to Iob, God speakeh once or twise, & one seeth it not: many excellent things are spoken which we obserue not: we heare generally with the hearing of the eare, so that we haue all need to haue that of the Prophet often vrged, He that heareth, let him heare: that so we might endeauour to fetch vp our hearts to our eares, that one sound may at once pierce the both: this is our slownes in attention: there is nothing that is heard more idly, then that which ought to be listened vnto most carefully. Secondly, for conceit & vnderstanding, our slownes therein equalleth our slothfulness in the former: many points are taught, & y with as much plainnes as is possible; in which notwithstanding he that speaketh seemeth as it were a Barbarian vnto vs. That same natural man which perceiueth not the things of the spirit of God, sometimes beareth too great a stroke within vs: sometimes also (God permitting it for our better hūbling) the god of this world blindeth

blindeth our minds, that the light of the glorious Gospel of Christ cānot shine vnto vs. **The blind man whō Christ healed at Bethsaida, when his sight began in some degrees to be restozed, being asked if he saw ought, he looked vp and said, I see mē walking as trees: he saw at the first not distinctly, but after a confused maner. I apply it thus: we are all by nature blind in the best things, and because they are spiritually discerned. of our selues we cannot see them: now when it pleaseth that God which commandeth the light to shine out of darknes. to shine in our hearts, we haue at y first but as it were a certain glimpse of heauenly matters, the pzeise & exact knowledge is not by and by attained.** **Thirdly, touching memory, how great weaknes there is in it, I cal euery mans conscience to witnes. Indeed we see how surely and how long men can remember matters of the wo:ld. The vncharitable and malicious man will remember an euill turne many a yere, waiting still an opportunity to reuenge it. The old man hath so fresh an impression of the toys & vanities of his youth, y he wil make you as persute a relation of them with euery**

2. Corinth. 4. 4.

Mark. 8. 23. 24.

1. Corinth. 3. 14.

1. Corinth. 4. 6.

circumstance, as if they had bene done but yesterday. The couetous worldling, though perhaps he can neither write nor reade, nor hath any to keepe his reckonings, yet he can remember all his bargaines, all his conditions in bargaining, all his dayes, and houres, & places, either for the payment or receipt of any thing. The young man or woman can sone learne without booke many a ballad or idle Loue-song, tending to the increasing or stirring vp of vncleannesse: and so it fareth in other particulars. But come now to matters of religion & piety, alas how true is it that the concept of them is as sone gone from our minds, as the sound from our eares? When Dauid enquired of Ahimaaz comming from the camp, touching Absolom, his answer was, I saw a great tumult, but I knew not what. Like to this will be the answer of a great many, when they retorne from the house of God they are demaunded touching the particulars there deliuered; they will say, they saw a man speaking, and heard the noise of his voice, and beheld his gesture, but they know not what, they can tell little of that which
was

2. Sam. 18 29.

was vttered by him. Lastly, for slownesse in practise, it is long before, after long hearing we are brought to incline to a good dutie, and yet after some good disposition to it, there are so many delays, and so many pul-backes, yea and after a reasonable beginning so many fallings backe, and so much waxing weary of well doing, that we are too well like Salomons

Gal. 6. 9.

sluggard, who it may be maketh many offers of rising, yet whilest he crieth, Yet a litle sleepe, a litle slumber, the time stealeth away, and his vineyard is all growne ouer with thornes for want of husbandry.

Prouerbs 6. 10.

Prouerbs. 24. 31.

This is our drowlie sickness of slownesse of heart: The best ordinary remedy against this disease, is often preaching, as you shall see if you well examine it. Continuall calling vpon, at last through a kind of importunitie will win vs to attention. Often repetition of the same points will both cleare the vnderstanding and settle the iudgment also. It grieueth me not (saith Paul) to write the same things to you, and for you it is a sure thing.

Phil. 3. 1.

That which after many times deliery is stil committed to forgetfulness, yet at the last it is laid vp in the mids of the hart,

Prouerbs. 4. 21

Eccles. 12. 11.

Isay 58. 1.
*Occidit miseris
 crambas &c. p. 1. 1. 1.
 magistrat.*

1. Corinth 9. 26

Isay 48. 4.

Ier. 20. 9.

2. Timothy 4. 2.
 chap. 2. 25.

Mathew 18. 22.

and by the negligence and backwardnes
 of many yeres, yet in the end (the words
 of the wise Preacher being like goades) is
 drawne vnto some cōfortable perfection.
 If oftē preaching may lawfully be com-
 complained of, who haue iust cause to
 grone vnder the burden of it, then we
 that are Ministers? For besides the wa-
 sting of the bodie's health, and the consu-
 ming of the vitall parts thereof, what a
 grieffe is it to a mans soule, to lift vp his
 voice to them which wil not heare? what
 a death and toyle to make infinite repe-
 titions of the same principles? what a
 vexation to beate the aire? what a discour-
 ragement and euen the killing of a mans
 heart, to haue to do with those whose
 neck is an iron sinew, & their brow brasie?
 and yet though these things might make
 a man to resolue with Ieremy, to speake
 no more in Gods name, yet we haue no
 such commission to giue ouer, but we are
 commaunded still to be instant, with all
 long suffering, prouing if God at any time
 will giue repentance. If a preacher should
 put forth such a question to Christ tou-
 ching preaching, as Peter did touching
 forgiuing, & should say, Master how long
 wilt

wilt thou that I preach vnto a stif-necked
and obstinate people? vnto seuen times? I
doubt not but he would returne him the
like answer that he did to Peter, I say not
to thee, vnto seuen times, but vnto seuentie
times seuen times. **When Peter & his com-**
pany had trauelled in fishing all night, &
had takē nothing, neuertheles at thy word Luke 5. 5.
(sayd he to Chriſt) I wil let downe the net:
The Lord hath called vs to be Fishers of Matthew 4. 19.
men. And though it be a great hart-brea-
king to haue laboured long to small pur-
pose, yet for our Masters sake there is
further triall to be made, hoping that yet
at the length that long-expected draught
will come, and accounting our selues
happie, and all our paines wel bestowed,
if with all that we can do, we shall gaine
one soule vnto God. To shut vp this
point then, if we shall duely weigh our
owne backwardnes, and withal the Mi-
nisters duty, of whom that instant dili-
gence is required, we shall then see that it
is much and often preaching which we
must wish for, beseeching the Lord to
pardon that aboue all things, if we shall
find the word through the common vse
of it to grow vile before vs.

Nymph. You haue said well to this point, onely you haue forgotten the multitude of the raine, which may be some occasion of doubt to vs that are common men, both because we find in the scripture the word of God to be compared to the raine, and because also in common experience we feeble the inconuenience of too great abundance of raine.

Epaph. I had not forgotten it, though if I had, it were not much materiall, it being indeed (but for the satisfiing of your minde) scarce worth the answering. We haue a rule in schooles, that borrowed speeches do make no grounded arguments; and for scripture similitudes it is certaine, that by pressing euery thing that is applied by the spirit of God for some speciall illustration, a man shall run into a world of absurdities; according as the Papistes in their violent twining of many parables, to giue some colour to their vile opinions, afford vs no small number of examples. It is true, the word of God is in the holy Scripture compared to raine, and that very fitly: because as the raine falling vpon the land, maketh it either more fruitfull

μη διαλεκτικῶν
τῶν μεταφορῶν

Isay 55. 10. 11.

fruitful or more barren, according to the nature of the soyle upon which it falleth; so the word that goeth out of the mouth of the Lord, doeth not returne vnto him vaine, but it becommeth either the sauour 2. Corint. 2.16.

life vnto life, or of death vnto death to those which heare it: making the thilde of God more zealous of good workes, Titus 2.14.

and the wicked more outrageous. I do not find in the scripture the similitude of raine when it is applied to the word to haue any further meaning: and therefore to stretch it further according to a mans owne priuate fancy, is to forget the Apostles rule of vnderstanding according to Romans. 12.3 sobrietie; and wilfully to continue in such a practise, is no other but to peruert the 2 Peter 3.16. Scriptures to a mans owne destruction.

The Lord doeth in the scripture threaten it as a plague, to take away the Prophet, Isa. 3.2. and to send a famine of hearing the word; Amos 8.11. and he promiseth it also as a blessing, to giue pastors which shall feede the people Iere. 3.15. with knowledge and vnderstanding, and watchmen which all the day and all the Isa. 62.6 night continually shall not cease: but I do not remember that euer I read, either often preaching threatened as a curse,

or seldome and thinne preaching promised as a blessing. And surely, if, as abundance of raine, so abundance of preaching were a punishment, I doubt not but the good laws of our Church which haue prescribed a prayer against ouer-much raine, might well set downe the same course in respect of much preaching: from which notwithstanding euery honest mans eares would abhorre. And therefore I will be bolde to conclude, that this reason pressing the similitude of rayne and moysture to the washing away of diligent preaching and hearing from out of Gods Church, is a very dry reason, which though it may appeare to haue some taste of witte, yet hath scarcely any smacke of honesty.

Nymp. I pray God therefore we may remember to make the prayer which our Sauer taught vs, namely, that *the Lord of the harvest would send forth laborers into his harvest*, and that he would so furnish them with gifts of knowledge, of utterance, and of zeale, that they may vrge and call vpon vs continually: for (as you truly sayed) we are so slow and backward, that except we
be

be dayly pricked forward and rouzed vp, we shall grow cold and carelesse, and be euen frozen vpo the dregs of our owne securitie. I know sir, that in good manners it is now high time to forbear troubling you any further, yet I would gladly craue your direction in one thing more; and that is this: for mine owne part I thanke God, I both do, and euer (since I had any tast of goodnesse) I haue loued preaching, onely I find a great defect in my selfe, that I cannot so profite by it as I would, and as I see many do. I am bold therefore to intreate you to shew me how and by what meanes I may heare profitably, both for the setting of my iudgement, and for the increase of holinesse in my common conuersation. The humours of many men, are herein verie strange: some say that there are such differences of opinions among you that be learned, that a common man knoweth not which of you to beleene: others hold opinion, that it is not for priuate ordinarie persons, to take vpon them to iudge of the things they heare; so that the resolution of the greatest part is, that it is the wisest way

1. TIM. 3. 2.

Mat. 5. 13.

either not to heare, or else if for satisfying the lawes they must heare, yet not to giue credit. Besides, there are many of vs which heare vsually, and yet are little bettered by it: their knowledge is but *vaine tangling*, and their conuersation not much differing from the irreligious multitude: they are like the fish in the sea, which howbeit it liueth in the salt water, yet is without all tast of saltnesse. So though they liue vnder a settled ministry (which is *the salt of the earth*) yet being tasted, wil be found vtterly without any true seasoning. Now if it might be, I would be loth to be in this number. and therefore my last (though not my least) suite vnto you, is to afford me your best counsell in this case.

Epaph. I must needs commend your good care in this matter: for indeed whatsoever men think, there is nothing so full of danger as is idle and vnprofitable hearing. Those things which are in their owne nature best, being ill vsed become most hurtfull. Hearing is the ordinance of God to draw vs vnto himselfe: but being vsed carelesly and vnprofitably, it turneth to our greater condemnation: and therefore you cannot be too carefull herein.

herein. It is true that men pretend many things whereby to shift off the diligence which is required in this behalfe: but their pretences being examined will become lighter then vanitie it selfe. They say, we that are Preachers, cannot agree among our selves; that is not absolutely true; for blessed be God many of vs do proceede by one rule, and do mind one thing. Besides, so long as we live here in the world, our understanding is mured with the darknesse of ignorance, and by reason thereof, there cannot chuse but be differences of opinions in some things even among the best. Take me three or foure, or halfe a dozen, which are dimme sighted, and cannot see without spectacles, if you set them to describe a thing a farre off, they will be of diuers and contrarie opinions touching it: now Saint Paul sayth, that in this life, we do but see, as in a glasse darkely: and therefore our iudgements in all things at all times cannot be the same. Moreover, it pleaseth the Lord sometimes for their punishment, which haue not receiued the loue of the truth, and so the discouerie of those which are

Phil. 3. 16

1. Cor. 13. 12

1. Thess. 2. 10

1 Cor. 11. 19.

1. King. 22. 22.

Matth. 7. 15.

Pro. 23. 23.

sathan to be a false spirit in the mouths of some, and to suffer them to come amongst vs in sheepes clothing, though inwardly they are ravening wolues. Now the possibilitie of being deceived when we heare, ought rather to increase our care in hearing, then to be an occasion of unwillingnesse to heare. This may be manifested by a plaine similitude: Salomon exhorting vs to be careful to obtaine the knowledge of Gods truth, deliuereth his exhortation in these words, Buy the truth: from this kind of speech I reason thus: If a man wanting necessaries, as meat and rayment, and being advised to furnish himselfe from the market, should make this answer: The world is so full of deceit, that a man knoweth not whom to trust, those which sell, many of them will not strike to beguile their owne fathers, and the trickes and deuises that tradesmen haue are infinit, so that it is twenty to one, but a man in chasering with them shall be beguiled, I had rather therefore go neare the wind, and want necessarie provision, then put it to the aduenture of buying. If I say, a man pleade thus, what would we thinke of him, but that
either

either he were very foolish or very forward? And indeed we might well so esteeme him, because we know that the fraud of others must be prevented rather with care and circumspection, and not used as an occasion of abridging a mans selfe of necessaries. Is not he then as much a foole, who wanting the saving knowledge of the truth, and being called vpon to repaire vnto the house of God, (which is as it were the Lords market, in which the hid treasures of wisdom and knowledge are laid open to the view and offered freely to the vse of all men) shall esteemes plead the deccieablenesse of false doctrine, the corruption of many Preachers, the shew of some contrarieties among them? Yes verily, for is he to deprive himselfe of the necessarie soue of his soule, because it may be for lacke of care, that in stead of hoping to be fed, he may be poisoned? Nay rather, he is to become the more warie, the more diligent in prayer, the more exercised in the Scripture, that when he cometh to buy the truth he may not be deceived.

Nymph. Truly you say well: onely it seemeth you build vpon a false ground: at least

in the opinion of some,) namely, that we which are priuate men, may iudge of that which we heare, and examine it whether it be the truth or no: I desire therefore that you would proue that point well vnto me.

Epaph. Indeed it is the opinion of posterie, that it is not for euery particular person of himsele, to examine, trie or iudge, w^h is true or false doctrine, who is a true or false docto^r: and it is a p^rinciple in that Church, that it sufficeth a common man to giue his consent to the church and to beleue as the Pasto^rs beleue. But all the true Ministers of Iesus Christ are of another iudgement: for howsoeuer we do vse all reuerent respect to the p^reaching of the word, as to the c^ondinace of God, yet we take not vpon vs to haue dominion ouer the faith of our hearers, as though we would bind them to giue credite to euery thing we speake, by the anthozitie of our name (as Ambrose his wo^rds are) therefoze because we speake it. And in truth there is nothing moze manifest in Scripture then this, that the people ought iudicially to examine the doctrine taught, befoze they dare to entertaine it.

Paul

Rhem Testa.
upon 1. Ioh 4. 1.

Priuate men
may and ought
to iudge of that
which they
heare.

2. Cor. 1. 24.

Ambros. in
1. Thess. cap. 5.

Paul to the Galathians sayth thus,
 Though we or an Angell from heauen Gal. 1. 8.
 preach vnto you otherwise then that which
 we haue preached vnto you, let him be ac-
 cursed. Now if he w^{ch} preacheth contrary
 to the reuealed truth be accursed, surely
 the case of him which giueth credite
 to him must needs be dangerous: and
 therefore for the auoydance of the dan-
 ger, it is meete for euery man to be fully Rom. 14. 5.
 perswaded in his owne mind, that he may co. 1. 12. 10. 10.
 discerne things that differ one from ano- Paul. 1. 10.
 ther. **The Thessalonians are willed to** 1. Thess. 5. 21.
 trie all things: those to whom **Saint John** 1. Ioh. 4. 1.
wrote, are counselled to trie the spirits.
Salomon hath branded him for a foole, Prov. 14. 15.
who will belieue euery thing. It is a dis-
 grace for men professing religion to be
 like children caried with euery wind of do- Eph. 4. 14.
 ctrine. **It is an hono^r to be like y^e gentle-**
me of Beraa, who searched the Scriptures Ac. 17. 11.
 daily, whether those things w^{ch} the Apostles
 taught were so. **Christ saith, y^e his sheepe** Ioh. 10. 4. 3.
 know his voice, and will not follow a stran-
 ger. What can be more expresse then
 these testimonies? Let any man con-
 sider the places and the parties to whom
 these commaundementes of taking

triall of the doctrine were directed, and he shall find that no one man is exempted from this dutie of examining.

A similitude
like to this, in
the same case
Chrysost. yfeth
Hom. 13. vpon
2. Cor.

Nymph. Indeed me thinketh it standeth with some reason, that we should trie the doctrine which we heare before we credit it: for otherwise we may soone be drawne into many errors: we haue a Prouerbe, that a man must tell many euē after his own father, not in distrustfulnesse as though we thought he would deceiue, but in wisdom, because vnwittingly he may be deceiued. No doubt we ought to be much more circumspect in matters of doctrine, because euen the best that teach, in that they are men may erre, and because also in matters of that nature to be deceiued, is so exceeding dangerous. But all the matter is, how to iudge, and by what meanes to be able to know truth from falshood, wholesome from vnwholesome doctrine.

The Scripture
the only iudge
of doctrine.

Epaph. Know this therefore for a truth, that in all cases and controuerfies of religion, the Scripture onely must be admitted as vmpire, and every thing must stand or fall at y^e determining thereof: for therefore hath the Lord commanded it to be witten and to be made common to all,

all, that by it all controuersies might be decided, all doubts resolved, all heresies confuted, all truth confirmed, euery conscience guided, euery mans life framed. Nothing is found that is disagreeing from it, nothing vnfound that is consonant thereunto. We are well contented to let that absurditie dwell with the parents of it, the Papists: namely, that the Scripture is rather to be tearmed an admonisher then a Iudge: let it be their glozie, to thinke basely of the written word, and to ascribe the authoritie of iudging to vnwritten verities and traditions, rather then to it: we haue learned that the Law which is come forth of Sion, and the word of the Lord that hath issued from Ierusalem, must be iudge amongst the nations: and we are commanded to appeale still to the Law and to the testimonie, assuring our selues, that there is no light in them, which speake not according to this word. We find that our Saviour himselfe stood to the iudgement and triall of the Scripture. Paul submitted his doctrine to the same rule. We read the learned in former ages, to giue the priuiledge of iudging onely to the Scripture. Augustin

*Commonitorium
non regula. Bell.
Lina. lib. 1. Pa.
cap. 9.*

Isa. 8. 20

Ioh. 5. 39

*Act. 17. 2. 6. 7.
28. 23.*

disputing with a chief Arrian, saith thus:
 Let vs dispute by the authoritie of the
 Scriptures, which are indifferent witnesses
 to vs both. And in another place: The E-
 pistles of Bishops giue place one to ano-
 ther, and Councils are amended one by a-
 nother, but the canonickall Scripture, that
 is the rule of all, and must correct all. Basill
 the Great demandeth that against all
 heretiques the Scripture only be the vm-
 pire. Cyprian saith, that the rules of all
 doctrines haue flowen from the Scrip-
 ture. Chrysostome willeth his hearers
 to fetch all things from the Scripture.
 But what shold we stand vpon the testi-
 monies of men, when the fore-alleged
 places out of the written text are so ap-
 parant? Therefore to prepare you to the
 trying of the doctrines which you heare,
 hold this firme ground, that all points
 must receiue their allowance from the
 Scripture.

Nymp. I could easily agree to you in
 this that you haue said, but that there is this
 difficultie therin, namely, how to make vse
 of the Scripture, and to apply it to this wor-
 thy purpose of finding out the truth there-
 by. You that are scholers, and haue the
 helps

*Aug. contra
 Max. Arrian
 lib. 3. cap. 14.*

Lib de Pastor.

Bas. Epist. 8.

*Cyprian. in Scr.
 de Bapt. Cir.*

*Chrysost. Hom
 12 in 2. Cor.
 πρὸς τὸν 2ον
 κῆρ, τίτλη, τὸν
 2ον 2ον.*

helpes of learning, and of the Artes and tongues, may make better shift in these cases, then we plaine men of the country can. There is no man that preacheth, but he alleageth the Scripture, and so carrieth it, that it may seeme to be absolutely for him in that which he auoucheth: so that vnlesse we be taught, how to iudge by the Scripture, we shall still be in suspence.

Epaph. You haue made a very needfull motion; and therefore, if you will listen to it, I will acquaint you with that course whereof my selfe both in my priuate studies, and in hearing others publicly, haue had very comfortable experience. First of all, when you haue occasion and oportunitie to heare, you must remember Salomons aduice, to take heede to your foote, & to vse some preparation before hand, praying the Lord to open your eyes, that you may see the wonders of his law, and that his spirit of truth may be with you to leade you into all truth. Secondly, you must laboꝝ by all meanes, to subdue & suppress the seeming wisdom of your owne heart, resolving to yeld vp your self to whatsoeuer y^e Lord reueales, though it be altogether crossing to your

How to make use of the Scripture for the trying of the truth.

Eccles. 4. 17.

Psal. 119. 18.

Ioh. 16. 13.

1. Pet. 5. 5.

Rom. 12.

Psal. 35. 9. 14.

Prov. 16. 4.

1. Cor. 1. 29. 31.

ἐν αὐτῷ καὶ ὁ δόξας.

owne reason, and displeasing to nature. For as God resisteth the proud, and maketh them which professe themselves wise to become fooles: so he will guide the meeke in iudgement, and teach the humble his way, and reveale his secret to them that feare him. Thirdly, when you haue thus framed and fitted your self by prayer and humilitie, be sure to remember this rule especially: namely, that that doctrine is the truest, which maketh most for Gods glorie, most for the comfort & reliefe of a wounded conscience, most for the restraining and curbing of our corrupt nature, and fleshly affections. Mark a litle, and I will shew you the reason of this rule. First of all, the end why God made all things, was the glorie of his owne name: the thing especially aymed at by him, in that great and admirable worke the redemption of mankind, and in all the particulars of it, euen from the first foundation of it, his eternall election, vnto the last end hereof, our glorification in heauen, is: That no flesh might glorie in his presence, but that he that glorieth might glorie in the Lord. This being then the maine end of all Gods courses,

to

to keepe the glorie of al things entire vnto
 to himselfe, it must needs be, that that
 doctrine is the most sound, which doth
 not admit the least empeachment of
 Gods glorie. Secondly, one chiefe end of
 the Scripture is, as to beate down man,
 and to cleane strippe him of all godnesse
 and inclination thereunto, for the kee-
 ping of Gods glorie whole vnto himselfe,
 so also to put gladnesse into all distressed
 hearts, and to bring the ioy of saluation Psal. 51. 12.
 to all afflicted spirits. David saith it is
 one propertie of the word of God to re- Psal. 119. 8.
 ioyce the heart: and Paul affirmeth that
 the drift of all the Scripture is, that we Rom. 15. 4
 through patience and comfort thereof
 might haue hope. So that, looke what do-
 ctrine bringeth the fullest comfort, to a
 poyze soule when it is euen at the depth of
 sorrow, that must needs be wholesome
 doctrine, seeing it concurreth with the
 whole scope of the Scripture. Thirdly,
 one thing principally intended, in the
 discouerie of that grace of God which Tit. 2. 11. 12.
 bringeth saluation vnto all men, was, that
 vngodlinesse and worldly lusts should be Gal. 5. 24
 denied, that the flesh with the affections
 and lustes should be crucified, that the body

Rom. 6. 6.

Col. 3. 5.

Luk. 1. 74. 75.

of sinne should be destroyed, and that mortifying our members which are on the earth, we should serue the Lord all the dayes of our life in holinesse and high countenance before him. And therefore that doctrine which presseth vpon men, the most precise and strict obedience to Gods will, not giuing any the least toleration to any the smallest sinne, but still byholing mans naturall inclination vnto euill, that is the truth of God which euery seruant of God ought to entertaine. Well me now, vnderstand you this direction?

Nymph. Yea truly, I do in some measure vnderstand it; yet if you shall please by one or two examples to shew the vse of it, I shal the better perceiue it, and know the rather how and after what sort to apply it.

Epaph. I will not sticke with you for that: because I am very willing to satisfie you in this matter. For y^e first branch therefore touching the glozie of God, take this example. We teach at this day, that faith onely iustificieth: our meaning is, that the very thing, which maketh a man stand righteous befoze God, and to be accepted to life euerlasting, is, the imputed righteousness of Christ Iesus: which
right

righteousnesse is appropriated and applied to vs onely by faith. Others (as the Papists) say, that to the iustifying of a sinner befoze God, two things are required, remission of sinnes, and the habit of inward righteousnesse, that is to say, charitie with the fruites thereof. So that we exclude, they establish the merit of mans works. Well then, in this difference of opinion, there being learned men on both sides, and Scripture alleaged on both sides, you desire to know which is the truth: bzing them both to the touchstone, & see which of the two maketh most for y^e glozy of God, & the matter wil some be answered, the doubt will quickly be cleared. Consider therfoze how euen the Apostle Paul by this rule decideth this controuersie: by what law (saith he) that is, by what meanes of saluation, is boasting excluded? Not by the law of workes, but by the law of faith. Whereupon he concludeth, therefore a man is iustified by faith without the workes of the Lawe. And indeede the reason is excellent: for if man could by any of his owne doings, further his owne saluation, or procure the increase of glozie in heauen,

*Bellarm. de In-
fuf. lib. 2 cap. 7.*

Rom. 3. 17. 18.

he had then some matter of gloꝝying, and might (as it were) account himselfe the lesse beholden vnto God. But iustificati- on by faith onely, taketh all vtterly from man, and ascribeth his whole saluation, the beginning, middle, and ending vnto the Lord: haue you both an example of this rule, and warrant for it, being vsed by the Apostle to decide so great a contro- uersie: and I am sure, that you shall find it of very great vse in many main points of our religion. Secondly, for the second branch of the rule which is about the co- fort and reliefe of a distressed and distra- cted conscience; marke this particular for the manifestation of the force of the rule. It is taught and maintained in our Church, that a Christian man may be vnfallibly certaine of his saluation in his owne conscience in this life, and that by an ordinarie and speciall faith. Others there are (both Papists, and some also amongst our selues) which hold that the certaintie of saluation, which in this life can be attained to, is onely coniecturall and probable, groun- ded onely vpon likelihoods: and this cer- taintie they confesse to be vncertain, and

such as many times both deceiue. Behold, here is a great controuerſie, and much is ſaid on either ſide: now you that are a private man, would gladly know to which part you may ſafely encline, and what to reſt vpon as the alone truth in this caſe. My aduiſe is therefore, that for your full ſatisfaction herein, you ſcan the matter by this rule: ſuppoſe a ſpirit deeply wounded, a conſcience ſet as it were vpon the racke, ſeing nothing in God but iuſtice and maieltie, and a conſuming fire; finding nothing in it ſelf but ſinne and corruption, and infinite matter of deſpaire, ſo that by this meanes it is brought to ſuch an exigent, that it knoweth not which way to turne, but is euen readie to crie out with Paul, Who ſhall Rom. 7. 24. deliuer me? Enquire now which of thoſe two doctrines doth aſſure the beſt comfort in this woſull caſe, that will quickly appeare: for the one holdeth the conſcience in a continuall ſuſpence. the other laboureth to ſettle it in the firme aſſurance of Gods vchangeable loue in Chriſt Jeſus: the one bringeth a plaſter, but much too litle for the ſore, telleth of the riches of Gods mercie, of the depth

of his loue, of the vnsearchable sufficiencie of Chzists merite, but yet denyeth the soules to be assured of a particular interest into it, and by that meanes rather increaseth then relieueth the anguish: the other applyeth the medicine to euery part of the wound, sheweth Chzist, discouereth the riches of Chzist, and putteth the amazed heart into a full, assured, and comfortable possession of Chzist. So that whatsoeuer shall be argued to the contrarie, you may be bold to build vpon that which bringeth the most ioyfull and welcome tidings to an affrighted conscience: that is best agreeing to the scope of the Scripture, that cometh nearest to the nature of the Gospel. Come now to the third brāch, which is concerning the libertie of the flesh, and let me giue an instance of that also. There is at this day a doctrine, (almost openly taught, or at least tolerated by many that shold teach otherwise) namely, that a man may do well inough, without so much preaching: that it is not a matter of that great necessitie to frequent the places of Gods publike seruice, but y^e a body may do well inough at home, with
some

Some private deuotions : that common men need not trouble themselves greatly with the scripture, or with knowledge in religion : that the religious spending of the Sabbath is a thing indifferent : that often communicating at the Lords table is not of any great importance, but that once or twice in a year is as good as every day : that it is not good to be too forward in matters of religion, overstrait in conuersation : that God wil beare with many small matters, &c. On the other side, there is a doctrine that telleth vs and proueth vnto vs, that if we desire to walke and to liue so as may please God, and as becommeth Christians, we must make conscience of often hearing the word, we must as new born babes desire the sincere milke thereof, that we may grow thereby, neuer contenting our selues with any measure of knowledge: we must strue & straine our selues, though sometime it be with some trouble and diseasing of our bodies, to come to y^e places of Gods worship, and to giue attendance at the postes of the doores of the Lords house: we must call the Sabbath a delight to consecrate it, resting not onely from labour, but from

1. Pet. 2. 2

Prover. 8. 33

Isay 58. 13

al things that may disable vs and make vs moze vnfit for Gods seruice, either in respect of preparation befoze it, or of conference and meditation after it: we must for the strengthening of our faith, and the solenne remēbring of the death of Christ oftē communicate: we must in our liues walk circumspectly, with zeale & courage and opennesse in the practise of religion: we must make conscience of the smallest sin, & neuer thinke we haue done enough in the duties of holy obedience. Here is againe a new question, and you perhaps in some of these particulars, through the diuersity of opiniōs, may be vnresolved. If you demaund of me, how you may be stablished, I refer you to this rule: search & consider which of the two tendeth most directly to the yoking & hampering and restraining of mans natural disposition: that wil sone appeere, if you look out into the world, & hearken how these doctrines are entertained: for the former, who so shall teach it, or sēme to appzoine it, no doubt that man shal haue many followers and many fauozers: for doth not euery man almost like it & wish it, that there should be lesse preaching: that it should be

be free to spend the Sabbath, every one
as himselfe listeth: to receiue the Com-
munion when men think good: to neglect
knowledge: to banish the Bible out of their
houses, or else to let it ly like old harnesse
rusting for lacke of occuppyng: wil it not
by and by be receiued, that it is not good
for men to be precise, to be ouer scrupu-
lous, to stand too nicely vpon points?
Surely he that shold teach this, I might
say of him as the Prophet spake of old,
He were a Preacher for the people. *Micah 2.11* But
now for the other doctrine, see what an
acceptation it hath in the world: he vpon
it will one say, what a tedious thing is
this to heare so many sermons, what a
trouble to come so often to the Church,
what a misery to be restrained from our
sunday-sports, what a dull time wil it be
and how long will the day seeme if thus
we be limited: what need so many com-
muniions: what shold men be so hot and
earnest in religiō: if this once take place,
farewell all mirth, farewell all good com-
pany, adieu to all thyring, if this be
hearkned vnto. This is and will be the
entertainment of this doctrine: it will be
reputed as the Prophets sermons were

of old, euen the Burden of the Lord. So by the generall yelding or gaineſaying of the multitude, it may ſome appeare which of the two is the greateſt enemy to the fleſh: and therefore you both may and muſt conclude with the latter doctrine, that that is from aboue, becauſe it meeteth with our corruption at euery turne, and is ſtill beating it downe, labouring to keepe it within compaſſe. And by this rule (to gaine it the more credit) Paul tooke vp the queſtion among the Galathians, touching the uſe of Chriſtian libertie, ſetting it downe ſo; a ground, that it is then beſt uſed when it is not vſed as an occaſion to the fleſh, but with a holy reſpect to become ſeruants each to other by loue. Thus I haue (ſo; your better vnderſtanding) giuen you an example of euery branch of this rule, that you may know how to apply it; aſſuring you out of mine own moze experience, that there are very few of the fundamentall points of religion, which directly concerne the worſhip of God, or our conuerſation with men, but they may receiue their triall by this Canon, and may truly be ſayed to ſtand or fall,

accoz^d

according to the iudgement and verdict thereof.

Antiph. I thanke you vnfaignedly for this directio ; yet touching this latter branch, it seemeth to me that there may be some doubt made, because the popish religion is thought to reſtraine and puniſh the fleſh more then ours : for it impoſeth many very itraite things and vnpleaſing, as faſting, penance, going barefoote, pilgrimage, payings of money, to purchaſe prayers when men are dead, and diuers the like : I pray you therefore cleare me in this onely doubt, and then I am ſatisfied.

Eſap. I ſay in one word of all theſe, as Paul did of things very like, They haue indeede a ſhew of wiſedome in voluntarie religion, and humbleneſſe of mind, and in not ſparing the bodie : but yet another way they giue greater libertie : for when it is taught that theſe things are meritorious, and of worth to do alway many ſinnes, what will not a man be content to do, for a weeke or an houre, or a ſhort time, for the remouing of the ſinnes of his whole life : and who will not be content when he is dying,

Col 2.23.

to giue all that away which hee must
 neede leaue behind, for the deliuey of his
 soule from a supposed purgatoꝝ: Who
 wold not go an hundred miles on pilgri-
 mage to the shꝛine of such oꝝ such a saint,
 to be assured that it shal be his discharge
 for the remainder of his life: So that
 though these bodily impositions may
 seeme something strait one way, yet
 they giue trebble libertie another way,
 and therefore may truly be sayd, rather
 to be an occasion to the flesh, then to li-
 mit the corruption of the flesh.

Nymph. It is very true; for what will a
 man feare to do, so long as he is taught,
 and by teaching perswaded, that by almes-
 deeds and fasting (falsly so called) and some
 legacies bequeathed to religious vses (as
 they terme them) or by consermitie to the
 penall imunctions of a priest, he may make
 sufficient satisfaction? therefore I hold this
 for answer enough to that obiection.

Epaph. Well neighboꝝ, to let that passe,
 & to follow the motion which you made,
 I must to y^e former rule adde one thing,
 which is this: Take heed by all meanes
 of such eares as the Apostle calleth itch-
 ing eares, and of delighting to get an heap
 of

of teachers. It is a dangerous humoꝛ to affect variety of instructoꝛs, and it must needs cause distraction: it filleth mens heads with a world of idle questions, & draweth them into vaine iangling. It is Satans policy as long as he can to hold men in ignorance, and in the contempt or neglect of knowledge: when he cannot preuaile that way, but men will listen to instruction, then he will endeuoꝛ to busie them with prophane fables and vaine babblings, which breed questions, rather then that godly edifying which is by faith: that so he may withdraw their thoughts, and steale away their hearts from those things which ought principally to be looked vnto. Especially remember the aduice of Paul to his sonne Timotheus, Continue thou in the things which thou hast learned and art perswaded thereof, knowing of whom thou hast learned them. Note the place. The Apostle presseth a stiffe and firme continuance in truths receiued, whē as these two things concur therewith; a mans owne perswasion; and the consideration of those which first taught vs. First, for a mans owne perswasion, I pray you to obserue

1 Tim. 1. 6.

1 Tim. 4.

Chap. 4. 20.

2 Timoth. 3. 14.

it, lest I should seeme in stead of grounded settlednesse, to commend selfe-willed peevishnes. By being perswaded, Paul meaneth thus much, as if he had sayd to Timothy, If it be an opinion which thou hast not sodainly entertained, but vpon good aduice, if it hath seated it selfe in thy iudgement then when as thou with care & conscience, with humilitie, with vsing the ordinary means, with prayer vnto God, with heartie desire to be guided in the truth hast enquired after knowledge, surely thou oughtest not, being by these degrees brought vnto it, and in this maner perswaded in it, rashly and sodainly to forgo it. This is that which is meant by perswasion in this place. A settlednesse of iudgement, following vpon an orderly course to bring a man thereunto. The second thing that must concurre, is the consideration of the parties of whom we haue learned: as if Paul had sayd, Obserue and marke well what kind of men they are, by whose ministry thou hast bene instructed; if they be men, who by their fidelity in teaching, and by the blessing of God vpon their labors, in vsing their ministry to conuert mens soules, do cary with them the
scale

scale of their ministry; nay if thine owne conscience can witnesse for them either of these out of thine owne feeling, then beware of a contrary doctrine: though I would not haue thee tie thy selfe to any mans authoritie, yet be well aduised before thou alter thy iudgement confirmed by such a ministerie. **This was Pauls meaning:** and if you care to follow it, you shall in experience find it good counsell. Thus I haue acquainted you with the best course I know as yet, both for the first informing, and the after-settling of your iudgement in Gods truth.

Nymph. I pray God to enable me by his holy spirit, both to remember and to practise this your good aduice. I will now make this onely request: you know it is not inough to be a man of knowledge, vnlesse a man do with knowledge ioyne obedience. *If you know these things* (saith our Sauour) *blessed are yee if you do them.* Wherefore as you haue taught me how to heare profitably for the gayning of knowledge, so I pray you direct mee how I may make good vse of hearing for the gouernement of my life.

John 13.17.

How to draw
things heard
into pra^{se}.

Proverb 17. 20.

Prou. 9. 8.

James 1. 21.

Psalme 141 5.

Epaph. In the first place therefore remember, as to pray to be guided into all truth by the spirit of truth, so to begge of God to direct the Preachers tongue, that he may speak vnto your conscience, and that his sermons may be as a glasse, in which you may behold the very true estate of your owne soule. Secondly, labour to put away from you that which Salomon calleth a froward heart, that is, a heart that cannot beare reproofe: remember it wel, and think seriously vpon it, that there can be no greater testimony of true wisdom then to loue him that rebu^leth you: and therupon resolute with your selfe befoze hand, that whatsoeuer is spoken against your sin, be it neuer so tart or vnpleasing, yet you will receiue it with all meeknesse, and esteeme it as a precious oyle. Thirldy, in hearing, endeavour when the Preacher hauing layed the grounds of his doctrine cometh to application, to obserue what is spoken by way of exhorting, what by way of reproofe, what with an intent to minister comfort: each point being referred to these heads, shall much the better be remembred. Fourthly, when you are departed

parted from the sermon, forget not to find a time as soone as is possible, whilst things heard are most fresh, in which to commune with your owne heart, and to ponder, and scanne, and search diligently those things which were deliuered. This is that which we call meditation, an exercise which David exceedingly delighted in: it is the same to the mind, that digestion is to the body: that which we heare is by it made our owne, so that the soule receiueth nourishment thereby. Now in the practise of this dutie, it is good to consider what things are presently necessary, and what otherwise. Those things which are of present vse, are eftsoues to be layed hold vpon, and a certaine secret oath is to be made betwene God and a mans owne soule, to make hurr and not to delay a speedy and diligent executio: yea though the dutie imoynd be both in shew painfull, and an enemy to worldly profit, an abridger of carnall delight, and a meanes by all likelihood to darken estimation and credit amongst men. If it be a matter of spirituall consolation, or of prouocation and incouragement to persist in a good duty, it must be reputed as a

Psalm 77. 6.
Luke 2. 19.

Psalm 119. 97.

Psalm 119. 100.

Psalm 119. 105.

Psalm 119 11.
Proverbs 4. 21.

hearing from heauen, and heart (as we say) to be taken thereby against all, either inward assaults or outward discouragements whatsoeuer. As for other points, which may seeme not to be of so present vse, they are not to be neglected, but to be hidden and kept in the middelt of the heart, that they may not be to seeke when the Lord shall offer occasion to employ them. You must do in this case as you do in household matters: if you find an implement which you know not how forthwith to bestow, you will say, it is pittie to cast it away, it will be no charge to keepe it, once in seuen yeares it may serue for a purpose, for the which you would be loth to lacke it: so though some things which you heare, are not (as may some) presently needfull, yet you must make conscience safely to preserue them, because a time of vse may come hereafter, in which, as it would be a grieue to want direction, so the Lord (it may be) may then in iustice deny that, which formerly being offered was entertained with contempt. In a word, looke to it that you be well furnished for all occasions,

caſions, and know it to be the chiefe du-
ty, and the eſpeciall marke of a good
Chriſtian, to take heed. and alwayes to
haue reſpect vnto the holy directions
which are ſoundly deliuered from Gods
woꝝd; ſo ſhall you become wiſe vnto ſal-
uation, and perfect vnto all good workes.
This is the ſhortteſt and moſt familiar
direction that I can giue you, ſo; the re-
ligious gouernement of your life by the
forme of doctrine, which in the oꝝdinary
miniſtery of the woꝝd ſhall be deliuered
vnto you. Larger directions the many
good bookes which good men haue writ-
ten of that matter, will plētifullly aſſeꝝd
you. This may ſerue at this time, and it
may be God will offer vs an occaſion to
talke of this matter more at large here-
after.

1 Pet. 1. 19.
1 Thim. 1. 19. 4.

2 Tim. 2. 15. 27.

Rom. 6. 17.

Nym. I hope ſo too: and I ſhall for my
part be ready to take any oportunitie, be-
ing encouraged both by this your kind-
neſſe, and by the benefite and comfort
which I muſt needes confeſſe I haue re-
ceiued by this preſent conference. For this
time therefore I commit you to God,
whom I heartily beſeech ſo to bleſſe your
labours in the miniſterie, that you may

